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This booklet compiles 30 papers selected from presentations at "Play in a Changing Society: Research, Design, and Application," the fifth triennial national conference of the American Association for the Child's Right to Play. The papers are grouped into five sections; each section contains an introduction to the papers. The sections are: (1) "Play and Society"; (2) "Play and Theory"; (3) "Play and Education"; (4) "Play and Fitness"; and (5) "Play and Advocacy." (Each paper contains references.) (EV)

Play in a Changing Society



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*The American Association for the Child's Right to Play
presents:*

Play in a Changing Society

Edited by:
Marcy Guddemi
Tom Jambor
Audrey Skrupskelis

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Preface

The American Association for the Child's Right to Play (IPA/USA) is proud to present selected articles from *Play in a Changing Society: Research, Design, and Application*, the fifth triennial, IPA/USA National Conference June 17-21, 1998. The conference was cosponsored by Hofstra University; Play Environments, LLC; and the University of Alabama at Birmingham, in Longmont, Colorado at the Raintree Plaza Conference Center. Over 75 presenters representing much of the United States as well as international presenters from England, Scotland, and Norway presented over 60 papers, posters, and symposia on topics focusing on many aspects of play: child development, education, recreation, safety, design, habitats, play therapy, international play opportunities, advocacy and much more. Of the many papers submitted to the IPA/USA conference proceedings committee, the editors selected 30 papers for inclusion in this publication.

The conference was supported by many organizations and institutions; had dozens of people who helped plan, organize, and work on conference committees; and was attended by over 150 participants. The conference which had three keynote addresses, a two thematic symposia, a PlayDay, focus sessions, exhibitors and plenty of playful activities for participants was a huge success. We would like to thank everyone involved, with special acknowledgments to the following:

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Marcy Guddemi from the Roosevelt Park PlayDay in Longmont, CO, June 20, 1998

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IPA/USA (The American Affiliate to the International Association for the Child's Right To Play) is a professional organization with members from all walks of life—educators, architects, landscape architects, physical educators, teachers, childcare givers, city planners, pediatricians, parents, and park and recreation people. Our mission is to uphold and support the child's right to play as guaranteed by the 1959 Declaration of Right for Young Children and further supported by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 31 (1989). Society is constantly changing, but the need for children to play and the subsequent benefits derived from play have not changed. We hope this collection of papers will "change" you to become a supporter of the child's right to play.

Marcy Guddemi, International Liaison
Tom Jambor, Member at Large
Audrey Skrupskelis, Secretary

October, 1999
www.ipausa.org

Play in a Changing Society

"You can learn more about a person in an hour of play than in a lifetime of conversation."—Plato

More than two millennia ago Aristotle and Plato espoused the power and benefits of play. Through the centuries many other great philosophers and educators also wrote about the value of play—from Comenius, Rousseau, and Froebel to Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky. In fact during this last century quite an impressive amount of research has been recorded on the value and benefits of play—a behavior and motif that defies definition. However, while societies have changed many times through the centuries (and surely will again in the future), the value of play and need for play has not changed! Play is a basic need along with nutrition, health, shelter, and education. Play is instinctive, voluntary, and spontaneous, done purely for pleasure, and has no predetermined outcomes. Play helps children develop physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually. Play is a way that children can communicate and express themselves. Play is a means of learning about life itself. Play is universal, knowing no national or cultural boundaries. Yet, as society prepares for the new millennium, time, and space and opportunities are diminishing for play.

This collection of papers is both a reminder and, hopefully, an incentive to the reader to promote the child's right to play. The authors of the articles within are interdisciplinary in field, but united in focus. They approach issues of play in a changing society from their own perspective—from societal and political trends to health and fitness themes; from theoretical and educational applications to advocacy for ensuring that the proper perspective on play is not lost. Many questions will be raised. For example: Why are the children playing less? Why are children less fit and at risk for serious health problems in this society? Why is recess being eliminated at schools across the country? Why are landmines a threat to children's play in some areas? What kinds of play should playgrounds be offering children? And how safe should playgrounds be? Are computers a new "bogeyman" stealing away children's play? Who should be the teachers and playworkers and how should they be trained? Can teacher education programs finally prepare teachers who know that children learn through play? Are the play needs of boys different from the play needs of girls? Who can stand up and speak for the right of children to play? As Albert Einstein noted, "Play is the highest form of research."

Our goal in presenting this group of voices is to challenge your thinking about the necessity of play in an ever-changing society. The only way children will be prepared for the next millennium and future changes in our society is to play to the fullest now.

Marcy Guddemi, Tom Jambor, Audrey Skrupskelis
October, 1999

Part One: Play and Society

Introduction

Society has an important role and obligation to deal with issues that arise from children's need to play in safe environments. Similarly, it needs to provide opportunities for children and their families to engage in play. With so many working parents struggling to find time for quality interactions with their children, in addition to finding developmentally appropriate quality childcare centers, it is crucial for society to provide support systems that encourage family bonding. Governments and state legislatures need to familiarize themselves with the latest research information about healthy development of children and to provide funds for programs that encourage healthy family relationships.

Clements looks at traditional intergenerational play activities dating back to America's colonial period, when families played together throughout the day as they were engaged in routine everyday chores. *Pazzanese* describes some play and arts festivals in the northeast that promote family participation and play while promoting pride in cultural roots. *Christiansen* writes about current trends in playground designs and provokes us into thinking not only about what the future will bring in playground design and equipment, but about the value and diversity of play activities themselves. *Bateman* brings up the issues that arise with men working in childcare. One of these issues is the stereotypical relegation of putting men in charge of sports activities outside, instead of involving them in the complete nurturing activities of female childcare workers. *Else and Sturrock* propose that a deeper understanding of the play process is necessary if we are to understand fully what is happening during play. They describe the theory of ludic ecology and suggest that we need to look past the surface of play to give play a real meaning. Finally, *Wheway's* investigation of play on housing estates sheds light on factors that facilitate play or hinder play in planned neighborhoods.

Intergenerational Play in a Changing Society

Rhonda Clements

This essay identifies a variety of intergenerational play experiences dating back to America's late colonial period in order to examine the values and interests derived from this aspect of play. It also discusses the need for intergenerational play in contemporary times, and includes information that can be used to offer an intergenerational play event.

Ice cream, birthday cakes, costumes, and even slippers, are all objects or things that are typically enjoyed by more than one generation. Creating a list of play experiences that can be equally enjoyed by a variety of mixed aged groups is more complex. This factor is no surprise since today's parents and teachers are frequently reminded by manufacturers to purchase "age appropriate" toys and active play objects, and the genuine need for "age and individually appropriate learning experiences" is well documented (Bredenkamp & Rosegrant, 1992). Problems may result, however, when parents and teachers overlook or forget how important intergenerational play experiences were to the cognitive, social, and physical development of earlier generations of children, when life was more simplistic.

In fact, our society as a whole seems to have shifted away from participating in many of the time memorial play activities that were once enjoyed by mixed age groups. Can the new computerized toys that encourage solitary play substitute for the interactions that occurred while playing a family table or board game? Will our society be the first to reject the teaching of traditional games that have survived for countless centuries, in favor of sport-related activities for young children that emphasize competition and require continual adult supervision? Are we producing future generations of children who have only experienced playing with members of their own age group, and thereby have very limited opinions when critical issues arise? Is it possible for today's children and their parents to find "equal enjoyment" from self-initiated play experiences, when the twentieth century offers the young child high-tech play objects that promise risk-taking adventures, and parents can select from a variety of technologically innovative forms of

leisure and entertainment? At some point, parents and educators must ask what effect these myriad of changes have on the growth and development of future generations of children.

To understand better how intergenerational play or cross-generational play used to occur and still can be a major facilitator of the young child's increased knowledge, positive social interactions, and ability to move efficiently, it is necessary to recall earlier periods of history, when all family members shared play and work experiences together. The following information is intended to reacquaint the reader with several intergenerational play experiences, dating back to this country's 17th century, in order to examine the values and interests derived from this aspect of play. It also identifies how today's teachers and parents can easily organize an intergenerational play event and select activities to facilitate the child's development.

Intergenerational Play of Earlier Times

The literature, paintings, and diaries of individuals living two hundred years ago provide personal accounts of the types of interactions that existed between family members. They support the notion that all family members were immersed in traditional roles (e.g., women devoted their energies to domestic tasks and men participated in self-taught trades and agricultural pursuits), and they remind us that the numbers of individual family members living under one roof greatly exceeded today's norm. Children experienced growing up with a greater number of siblings; often one or two aunts or uncles, and sometimes both sets of grandparents. The interactions that occurred had a great impact on the extent to which young children were exposed to varying beliefs, interests, and talents.

The presence of grandparents provided the young child with a sense of roots and security. The grandparents could relate how the child reminded them of earlier family members in physical characteristics and in special talents (e.g., "You have your Aunt Sarah's blue eyes and her ability to draw and paint"). These comparisons assisted young children in knowing who they were within the family structure, thereby increasing their

sense of self-identity.

Grandparents were also instrumental in showing the young child how to use the environment's natural resources in a variety of playful and purposeful ways. For example, children were taught how to create pressed flowers, weave baskets from reeds, make bowls and other containers from gourds, decorate gift boxes with sea shells, create balls from leather stuffed with goose feathers, and design chains and necklaces from dandelion flowers and weeds. They picked rosemary and other sweet smelling herbs for their clothes and linen chests. Children were also shown how to select the best fruits, how to peel and carve creative shapes and designs, and how to use the seeds in games involving fortune telling.

Grandmothers discussed family recipes and encouraged the children to learn cooking techniques that had existed for several generations. Children acknowledged their grandmothers' abilities to prepare food a specific way, and grandmothers experienced pride when revealing the "secret ingredients" that guaranteed success. These recipes were not only cherished for their obvious food value, but they also provided an additional way to learn about one's heritage, and the likes and dislikes of the individuals that had developed the specialty dish.

The art of quilt making was another means to learn about the family's heritage. Each tiny patch of worn cloth sparked some memory of a home birth, marriage, or family sorrow that could be conveyed to the children. Realizing that a favorite piece of clothing could be reused in the geometric configuration of a beautiful new quilt not only taught the children to be frugal, but also demonstrated how memories could be preserved in a meaningful way.

Many grandfathers shared talents related to knot tying, wood marquetry, whittling, leather crafts, and the ingenuity of designing jigsaw puzzles from soft wood. They also played a large role in the child's understanding of work ethics, feelings about aging, and conveyed how the body changes over time. The child naturally developed a sensitivity to the physical limitations of older adults through casual observations.

The narrow standards of proper decorum didn't hamper the extent to which creative

mothers interacted and fostered their children's development. Many literary pieces highlight the joys that young children received while assisting their mother in churning butter, gathering eggs, making lye soap from melted meat fat and wood ashes, pulling taffy, and candle dipping. In fact, by the time young girls reached the age of five, many had been introduced to the skills of knitting and sewing to produce a pair of stockings or clothes for their doll, and boys knitted their own suspenders (Earle, 1974). Girls were also familiarized with simple embroidery stitches to outline Bible verses, and were shown how to operate the weaver loom to produce scarves and table mats. Many boys and girls were taught how to break, spin, and weave flax to make thread for linen cloth.

Many fathers possessed the ability to construct stacking blocks, wooden stilts, doll houses, and small wheelbarrows for their children. Handcrafted wooden hobbyhorses were the toy cars of the time (Wright, 1965). Some ambitious fathers accepted the challenge of creating a model of the legendary "Noah's Ark" that contained pairs of long-necked giraffes, oversized elephants, curly-haired lions, and whiskered rabbits. For many generations, Noah's Ark was the only plaything that children were permitted to enjoy on Sundays, and it was therefore highly cherished by children (Kalman, 1992).

It was also the fathers' mission to acquaint their children with the natural aspects of the family's property. Excursions included exploring, hiking, and surveying. Special trips to nearby streams, rivers or lakes provided opportunities for the youngest children to catch pollywogs or frogs, to use a self-made fishing pole, to learn how to swim, to discover a patch of wild berries, to hang from a branch of a tall tree, to frolic in a pile of leaves, or to help father select the next site for the family picnic.

Aunts and uncles often taught family members how to play musical instruments. These included the flute, the fiddle, and the zither (i.e., a shallow box with thirty to forty-five strings stretched over it). They also showed the children how to create musical sounds from common household objects (e.g., spoons, tin kettles), and they helped children to memorize words to favorite songs, hymns, as well as dance steps to simple reels, jigs, and square dances.

The family's outdoor intergenerational

play included both vigorous and non-vigorous activities that were primarily determined by the seasons of the year and the availability of daylight. The cold of winter provided opportunities for family sleigh rides, tobogganing, outings with snowshoes, and skating. Family members also donated their old worn woolen coats, scarves or hats to complete a figure of a snowman.

The fireplace or hearth provided a cozy setting for sharing the days' events, for reminiscing earlier adventures, and, of course, for storytelling. Ghost stories featured goblins, giants, fairies, and evil witches. The story game, "The Old Family Coach" challenged the child's ability to listen carefully as each player selected one part of the stagecoach (e.g., the wheel, seat, baggage carrier), and responded to the storyteller by standing up and turning around each time his/her perspective item was included in the story. Any family member missing this cue was obliged to pay a forfeit, as determined by the other family members. Likewise, joke telling often captivated the child's attention since the typical joke usually included a long, twisting plot, followed by the humorous ending. The glow from the fireplace also allowed family members to trace each other's profile on white sheets of paper to create lasting silhouettes, or it provided the light needed to form a large variety of hand shadows.

Many of the summer months were dedicated to toiling in the garden and planting crops. It was customary during earlier times to leave a walkway through the center of the garden and pathways around the outside perimeter so that all family members and visiting guests could stroll and view the prized herbs, fruits, and vegetables (Earle, 1974; Kalman, 1992). Young children took great joy in pumping water from the family well. They played freely in the new soil, dug clay to be used for simple sculptors, collected and polished rocks, captured fuzzy caterpillars, and expressed great delight when offers of wheelbarrow rides were presented.

The children were also shown how to create cornucopia dolls and puppets from vegetables and fruits. The last cucumber crop of the season was often allowed to grow long and fat so that the bloated fruit could be used to fatten the hogs. It was not uncommon for a child to rescue one or more of these oversized fruits from its predetermined fate in order to create a baby doll. The doll's face

was created by carving two deep set holes for eyes, and berries were strategically embedded into the object to represent lips. Mothers supplied an unused rag or swatch of cloth to serve as the doll's blanket.

Summers also provided opportunities for horseback riding, paddling a canoe, rowing a small boat, or using a long broken branch to navigate a raft. All family members assembled after the "supper" hour to participate in horseshoes, quoits, lawn bowling and tenpins, croquet, earlier forms of badminton, and well-known games such as Hide-and-Seek, Blindman's Buff, Musical Chairs, Hop Scotch, and Puss in the Corner. Passive games included playing with wooden hoops, marbles, spinning tops, creating and flying kites, string games, Knucklebones (i.e., jacks), Jackstraws, (i.e., Pick Up Sticks), darts, apple ducking, checkers, and a large variety of riddles, word games, and rhymes. The rules and fundamental tasks of each activity were passed on from parent to child and from sibling to sibling.

In discussing the sports and pastimes of families living in the late colonial period, Louis Wright (1971) stated: The family was a social unit of great importance, for the family stayed together for work and play in a way that is unknown now. In a period when there were no labor-saving devices, mutual helpfulness was essential. When the daily chores were done, few external diversions lured the family to go its separate ways, as is our custom. The family not only had to work together but had to find amusements in which all could join (p. 215).

Values Derived From Early Intergenerational Play

The intergenerational play experiences of earlier times were critical to the young child's healthy development, since these play activities were the primary means by which the child developed personal relationships and mastered the environment. Granted, the child's growth was somewhat limited by the available resources that his or her family possessed; however, each experience was especially meaningful since it involved family individuals whom the child loved the most, unlike today where in many instances childcare centers assume the primary role for the child's growth. For example, the shared play experiences and interactions with a grandparent encouraged the child to acquire traditions, attitudes, and values that aided the child in becoming secure

and positive in long-term relationships with peers and older adults. The musical talents of aunts and uncles encouraged the child to express his or her thoughts and feelings more creatively through song and dance. The joy of exploring nature with a father satisfied the child's natural urge to move in a variety of ways, and increased the child's appreciation of the environment, since rural America offered an abundance of raw material to see, smell, taste, hear, and manipulate.

Intergenerational activities with one's mother increased the child's ability to observe and experiment with new objects and substances and to maintain a high self-esteem, no matter how small the task or accomplishment. Group family activities increased the child's sense of initiative. Early families strongly believed that their own efforts were responsible for their success. Hence the relationship between effort and achievement was made very evident through the child's active participation in a variety of vigorous and nonvigorous play activities. In brief, many children of earlier times acquired the understanding that life is multigenerational, and a person could experience sheer fun by sharing ideas and playing with each other.

Intergenerational Play Today

This is less the case today, as reinforced by Butsch (1990) in his work concerning the transformation of play and leisure: Two centuries ago Americans purchased few leisure goods or services; many made their own music and toys for their children and drank homemade cider. Today, most of our leisure activities depend upon some purchased commodity: a television set, a baseball, tickets to the theatre (p. 3).

The emergence and widespread use of electronic games, video programs, and commercial play centers, has had a tremendous influence in curtailing children's interactions with neighborhood playmates, exploration of the outdoors, and sharing quality play experiences with parents. The talents of aunts and uncles have been replaced by private instructors with expertise in music, dance, and movement. The learned play activities involving grandparents are limited or even nonexistent for children whose grandparents live too far away for frequent visits. More alarming is the realization that a large percentage of today's parents lack the understanding and repertoire of time memorial play activities that previous generations possessed.

Intergenerational play activities provide one of the few avenues for parents and their children to develop and enjoy mutual interests that can continue throughout one's lifetime. For example, many parents greatly enjoy browsing and collecting antique items. This pastime would not typically interest a young child. However, the child's fascination and cognitive development can be heightened when the parent conveys the fun of exploring and searching for items more appealing to the child's liking (e.g., antique trains, teddy bears, marbles, dolls, and music boxes). This joint experience releases the parent's playful attitude, and the child's newly developed enthusiasm can serve as a topic for mutual discussions concerning likes and dislikes. Parents who expose their children to a variety of intergenerational play experiences of this nature decrease the likelihood that the child in later adolescence will express, "I have nothing in common with my parents."

Mutual interests can also be found while visiting specialty museums (e.g., natural history, science and industry, the arts, and a car or doll exhibits), or specialized factories (e.g., car, airplane, chocolate, dress, or toy). Shared jogging, cycling, or hiking can increase the child's physical abilities, and knowledge of physical fitness. Attendance at children's musicals, recitals, and concerts fosters the child's cultural awareness. Participation in puppet shows, variety shows, and community theatre can bring about the child's artistic talents. An appreciation for different animal groups can stem from visiting national parks, zoos, and local farms. The child and others in the family may become enchanted by one particular animal (e.g., the horse) and take part in a variety of specialized events and settings (i.e., horse shows, polo matches, stables, and equestrian centers). A mutual infatuation for boats encourages family members to attend boat shows, regattas, and the naval yard. Bird watching, weather watching, or star watching enhance the child's observation skills. And, like earlier times, intergenerational play can focus on activities that assist the child in mastering his or her environment (e.g., activities involving the seashore, gardening skills, ethnic cooking, and homemade crafts), as well as developing shared hobbies (e.g., collecting stamps, rocks, shells, baseball cards, or comic books), or generate a love for reading (e.g., an affinity with a specific storybook series,

favorite authors, simple mystery novels, and trips to the library).

Conducting An Intergenerational Play Event

Teachers of young children are frequently seeking activities that encourage parents to become more involved with their child's growth and development, and concerned parents have a genuine interest in their child's cognitive, social, and physical abilities. An intergenerational play event can help to address this need without the teacher having to secure an abundance of funding or special expertise, since the core of the function focuses on shared learning and play. This does not suggest that all parents will automatically know how to play with their children. In fact, many parents admit to having a very limited knowledge of play content because they have relied on twentieth-century electronic entertainment and the commercialized play industry to fulfill this responsibility. Therefore, like any large-scale event, there are several factors that must be considered when developing and implementing an intergenerational play event. These factors will vary depending on the number of desired participants, the age of the children, the number of available assistant teachers and volunteers, and the amount of available space and resources.

The following information briefly identifies some of the primary considerations for the individual educator wanting to conduct an intergenerational play event for twenty to twenty-five children who are three to four years of age. The most crucial considerations entail (a) preliminary planning, (b) selecting appropriate intergenerational activities, and (c) organizing the activities.

Preliminary Planning

In this initial phase the teacher selects a date, a convenient time, and a setting. The last hour of the school day, just before the children are scheduled to be picked up by the parent (3:30 to 4:30), or directly following the family's dinner hour (6:30 to 7:30) should be a strong consideration. Generally, sixty to ninety minutes is an appropriate duration of time for this age group, and many parents are willing to leave their work settings one hour early.

Ideally, the event should be set in a gymnasium or a large multipurpose room. Since this is not an option for many childcare settings, two classrooms cleared of any large furniture and desks can offer sufficient space. Following this preliminary decision,

a letter is prepared on the school's or center's stationery inviting all parents, grandparents, or guardians to accompany the child at the event.

Selecting Appropriate Activities

Successful intergenerational play activities are intrinsically appealing to both the child and the adult, and they inspire active participation and exploration. To achieve this objective the activity must be noncomplex, easy to understand, and require no previous practice. Teachers can appeal to different play interests by offering an equal number of vigorous and nonvigorous activities like music and rhythms, art and crafts, and passive and active games.

For example, most simple rhythmical activities provide opportunities for the young and older to learn by doing, and frequently end with laughter and spontaneous clapping. When teaching a simple folk dance or singing game involving several movements, teach the activity movement by movement. This "learning by doing" technique lets the players learn each step as the dance progresses. A wide variety of rhythm items (ribbon sticks, drums, cymbals, and ankle and wrist bracelets) do not require any instruction and can be used to encourage the child and the parent to create musical sounds.

Tables containing simple card games (e.g., Go Fish, Hearts, Crazy Eights, Matching), board games (e.g., Candy Land), puzzles (e.g., jigsaw, three-dimensional, or word puzzles, and simple crossword) and books containing riddles and guessing rhymes stimulate the child's cognitive development and peak many parents' enthusiasm. Arts and craft tables can provide materials for the child and the parent to create a simple model of their home, or to paint a modest family portrait. They can also play with numerous colors, textures, shapes, and designs when exploring the basic skills involved with sand painting, silk printing, papier-mache, balloon shaping, beaded jewelry, plaster molds, clay pottery, feltcraft flowers, magnetic shapes, origami, and paper bag crafts.

Activities emphasizing the physical domain should be aimed at increasing the child's basic movement skills and encourage cooperative active play. One example includes creating a homemade miniature golf course. To do so, each parent and child cooperatively decorates discarded containers, cardboard boxes, tin cans, or buckets,

with craft materials to produce an original miniature golf hole. The combined effort of all families results in a large-scale miniature golf course that can be enjoyed by all age levels when a variety of child-size putting irons with oversized heads are constructed or purchased. The play experience also inspires the child to find new uses from scrap items.

Organizing the Activities

Self-contained stations are an effective way of organizing the selected activities. This system of organization allows for self-direction on the part of the parent(s), the child, and the group of participants as a whole. An ideal setting should have ample space for eight to ten stations with adequate space separating each station. Each station has one intergenerational activity. Each station also includes one handmade sign that identifies the name of the activity (e.g., "Ribbons and Rhythm") in large, easy-to-read, bold letters, and another sign containing one or two sentences giving simple instructions or fun-invoking directions (e.g., "Create circles and squiggly lines with these colorful ribbon sticks").

The role of the teacher or supervisor should be restricted to initiating the play. To increase the likelihood of immediate participation, all families can be encouraged to partake in a whole group cooperative activity (e.g., playing with a parachute, or a modified cooperative game) before selecting one specific intergenerational station to begin the rotation process from station to station. The teacher circulates throughout the facility and furnishes additional materials when needed, provides music and simple decorations to maintain a cheery atmosphere, and whenever possible, photographs all participants so that each family may have a "keepsake" souvenir of the event.

In conclusion, intergenerational play events of this nature provide children the opportunity to watch their parent's or step-parent's reactions to different play activities, as well as seeing how they respond and complete the activity. These events reinforce the bond that was created earlier when the parent was the child's first play partner, and they also introduce a variety of common interests that can be continued beyond the one-time experience. Most importantly, intergenerational play activities reinforce the idea that people are more important than possessions. This realization is critical to the child's healthy development, and is at the

core of intergenerational play in our changing society.

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Families Creating Together: The Spirit of Inclusive Play and Arts Programs

Edward Pazzanese

This paper focuses on multi-generational families' participation in inclusive play and arts programs. Many educators agree that there is a critical need for creative arts in play programs that enable and empower the family unit. While traditionally overlooked and devalued art and play are expressions for strengthening families, encouraging participatory experiences, which foster a sense of community, and establishes a forum for communication. To accomplish the stated goals, I believe that we need to design more neighborhood based play and arts programs that include children/youth with a wide range of diverse disabilities. The word "families" in this paper is defined in the broadest sense. Anyone who cares for children is considered a family member. The term "inclusionary settings" is one that includes people of different ethnic/racial identity, multi-generations and abilities.

In conceptualizing this presentation, I reflected on the following three considerations:

1. How do play and arts programs contribute to the life and strength of a community?
2. Who has access to neighborhood-based arts and play programs?
3. How can we empower community members to make decisions and hold leadership positions in their educational and cultural organizations?

Many factors might explain why there are so few family art programs in existence. One factor is the changing structure of families. There are more United States couples with children who maintain two incomes today. In 1950, only 12% of mothers with children under the age of six worked outside of the home according to Newsweek. Another factor is that pre-school and school age children in the United States watch 27 hours of television per week according to Wheelock College Professor Dr. Petra Hesse.

Victor D'Amico's contribution to the field of Art Education has been an exemplary predecessor to current family efforts. He was an internationally acclaimed teacher and leader who directed the Museum of Modern Art Department of Education from 1949 until his retirement in 1970. One of his accomplishments was the creation of the People's Center as an environment, which

fostered children's creative growth. It was one of the first art centers to offer art classes for children under the age of 3. In 1950, this center first offered classes for parents and children as well as Family Art Workshops. Additionally, D'Amico initiated and developed the program "Through the Enchanted Gate" aired on WNBT television reaching millions of American families. This television series showed D'Amico working with children and their parents on the creative process.

I would like to highlight some family art programs in Boston and its surrounding communities.

La Pinata: Latin American Family Network

La Pinata Latin American Family Network began in 1991 by performing artist-educator Rosalba Solis at the Jamaica Plain Art Center with the help of a \$ 3,500 Safe Neighborhoods grant. One of the initial concepts of this program was to keep alive the Spanish language in an English speaking society and preserve Latin American cultural ties as well as traditions. It engaged six families each Saturday in an exploration of traditional folklore such as music, dance, crafts, puppetry, drama, and storytelling. The participating families came from Bolivia, Puerto Rico, Santa Domingo, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela. This program has grown to the participation of 35 families at Spontaneous Celebrations in Jamaica

Plain, Mass. The families come from Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama, Venezuela, Columbia, Bolivia, Peru, and Chile offering a rich blend of cultural expressions.

This summer, La Pinata sponsored its second cultural exchange to Mexico. Participants performed, attended workshops, and enjoyed sight seeing to cultural and historical sites. The Boston, Massachusetts Foundation, Cultural Council and Spontaneous Celebrations provided funding and support.

Spontaneous Celebrations

Spontaneous Celebrations began 20 years ago by the initiative of a network of activists and community artists who were opposed to the construction of an eight lane highway (I-

95) in the late 60's and 70's, which would have destroyed their neighborhood. They used consciousness-raising, street theatre, and organizing tactics to involve the community in stopping the construction of the highway. This community cultural center is housed in a converted old German Club in a multicultural Jamaica Plain neighborhood. The center offers classes in creative arts and holistic health, pre-festival workshops, performances, rehearsal space, special events, and a Social Change Cafe. One of the center's new programs is a ten-week Teen Art Program. This program trains teenagers in a variety of art forms, which they can in turn teach to younger children participating in out of school time programs.

Each autumn, Spontaneous Celebrations organizes the Lantern Parade in collaboration with the Jamaica Plain Pond Project and Boston Parks and Recreation Department. In this 15th annual Lantern Parade, the pond was surrounded with light as people walked together. The festival included Balatone, a spirited Latin American band to dance to on the Gazebo. Lantern-making workshops, using readily available recyclable materials, were held at the Boathouse, Community Centers, fairs, and the German Club. We estimate that the lantern parade had one of the largest crowds ever, 3000 participants.

Last year, Wake Up the Earth Festival celebrated its 20th anniversary. This multicultural festival in Stonybrook Park engaged community members in pre-festival workshops in puppetry, mask making, and banner making in preparation for a wonderful homegrown parade. The festival fairground was adorned with a wonderful community mural depicting the history of Mayday as well as other public art installations. There was also a children's activity area and multicultural performances which showcased local and community talents.

Mudflat

Mudflat Studios is a 27 year old Somerville based Ceramic Art Center that provides studios to 20 artisans in a renovated storefront. This studio offers classes for children, teens, adults, and families and has a long history of special programs and outreach efforts to area elementary/ secondary/ early childhood settings. Elee Koplow, a Mudflat Artist in Residence, has taught the

Parent-Child Ceramics class since 1994. The class is taught in three eight week two hour classes yearly. Some of the ideas explored in these creative family workshops include marble races, name plates, sculptures, and a Jewish Minora

Family Place

The Museum of Fine Arts launched Family Place in 1987 as an outreach effort to encourage children and families to feel welcome and to learn about the diverse collections housed in the museum. It is a self-guided drop-in program for adults with children ages four or older. This museum education program is offered Saturdays and Sundays from October-June and it attracts between 500-1,100 visitors each weekend. This is a nationally acclaimed program viewed as a model for efforts to increase family participation in museums across the country. Curriculum materials have been developed for Ancient Egyptian, Nubian, Greek, and Roman Art, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Indian, Southeast Asian, French Impressionism and European paintings, and American paintings and Sculptures. This year, new materials have been developed for the permanent galleries of Art of Africa and Art of The Ancient Americas.

During the past ten years, the Division of Education and Public Programs has focused on attracting and sustaining audiences from diverse cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. These outreach efforts have been accomplished by collaborating with community agencies and the Boston Public Central Library and its neighborhood branches.

There has been a social movement to create more integrated settings in the past decade, as a result of hard work by individuals with disabilities, activist parents, professionals, disability rights advocates, and architects/planners. These efforts have been instrumental in promoting legislation that affords educational and cultural opportunities for people with disabilities in society. One example is the passing of Public Law 94-142 in 1975 ensuring that children regardless of disability have the right to a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. Another landmark legislation passed by Congress was Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act that prohibits discrimination under program or activities receiving federal financial assistance. The Americans with Disabilities Act, a civil rights bill, was signed into law on

July 26, 1992. This historic measure addressed numerous concerns of individuals with disabilities, which include the right to employment opportunities, access to public facilities, availability of transportation, adequate educational facilities, and utilization of technology.

Summary

There is an opportunity to experience creative family play and arts experiences in your own home. There are increasing opportunities in neighborhood based cultural centers, museums, and parks to participate in facilitated family art programs. There has also been a momentum in opening doors in community-based cultural, educational, and recreational settings to people with disabilities. However, there remains a critical need for creating new accessible programs in schools, churches, YMCAs, and other out of school time settings to meet the changing needs of families.

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Beyond All the Hype & the Defamation...

Keynote address at the IPA/USA conference in Longmont

Monty Christiansen

"PLAY" ... "PLAYGROUND" ... What meaning will these have in the future? Can we look forward to a society that values these for tomorrow's children or will the future discard these concepts as impractical, wasteful, and archaic? A look into the future can be interesting; it can be fanciful; it can be amusing; it can be foreboding; it can be encouraging ... In fact, I think it is all of these.

What I want to share with you here will include all of these and more. I've combined a variety of thoughts, a collection of trends, and the predictions and forecasts of a number of people.

Just remember, some of what I share with you is "cutting edge" technology. Some of the stuff is "good news ... bad news" scenarios. Keep in mind that "every cloud has a silver lining"; it may be sufficient to identify a problem now in order that a solution can be offered in the future.

Jean Dixon predicts the future; gypsies read crystal balls; "the Great Karnak" (a.k.a., Johnny Carson) can hold a sealed envelope to his forehead and declare "The answer is ...". And don't forget "Federal Agent Scully" has read the X-File and noted "The truth is out there." So, here it is:

Let's look first at a series of trends. These trends are exemplified here by just two or three cases; I leave it to you to identify other examples from your own experiences.

The Elimination of An Elementary School Playground for New Schools

(I cite the examples of an elementary school just built in Atlanta, GA, according to a recent NY Times article, and of the Jefferson County, CO, School District that is considering it Charlotte Observer, April 23, 1998. Additionally, the Irish Times of June 6 lamented the findings of a British survey that found children were losing out by not having enough play time during their school years. — It seems this may be an international trend, not just an American one.)

The trend is the restrictive and narrow refocusing of the mission of our schools: "The role of schools is to develop the mind, not the body." New schools are being built without music rooms, art rooms, and gymnasiums, as well as without playgrounds. Instead they have instructional media cen-

ters, computer centers, and more classrooms. This may be the result of pressures, real or perceived, to "grade" the success of our schools by academic performance only. There is a trend toward private or charter schools which are touted to be academically superior to public schools. There is nothing wrong about aspiring to academic excellence, but schools are more important than just being scholar factories. Schools must produce the entire individual and this includes physical, emotional, and social development as well as cognitive abilities.

Concern by Health Officials and Physical Educators that Children are Fat, Out of Shape, and have Early Heart Disease Symptoms.

According to news articles published last April, 85% of all 5-year-old children can't pass a basic physical fitness test. Forty percent of all 12-year olds display obesity, hypertension, high cholesterol and inactivity. These data suggest that fewer children are engaged in active play. This is happening either because the opportunity for active play isn't provided (as when elementary schools do not have appropriate playgrounds) or because children choose another more sedentary pastime such as TV or video games or cruising the Web. We need to convince facility planners and directors that playgrounds are an essential component to schools and community settings. We need to offer playgrounds that are stimulating alternatives to the passive diversions children are currently opting for.

New "Schoolyard" Concept

One trend which may be acting in a positive direction — to counter those noted previously — is the redefinition of the school yard from just a collection of play apparatus (usually arranged for the convenience of the maintenance person) to an extension of the classroom, where hands-on opportunities for collaborative learning, problem-solving, physical and social development and nature study are available.

One example of this is the Park Forest Elementary School Y.A.R.D. Center, in State College, PA. Y.A.R.D. stands for Youth Activity & Recreational Development. I hope to show this prototype schoolyard next year during the 1999 International Playground Safety Conference at Penn State.

Increase in Recognition of Integration of Multiple Ages in Play

This is recognition that children at play are engaged in a social activity rather than a solitary physical one. The strictly anthropometrically based play equipment design principle of exclusive age-specificity — "this" is designed for the toddler, "that" is designed for the preschooler, and "those" are designed for the preadolescent child — may be successful if children used playgrounds in groups defined only by age and developmental level. In some instances, such as at some preschool childcare facilities, this can work to the advantage of the children. More commonly, children use public playgrounds in-groups defined by social patterns — children living in the neighborhood, wide age ranges of multiple classrooms sent to recess at the same time, even at commercial facilities. We are beginning to learn from our Scandinavian colleagues that there is much to be gained in social development when older and younger peers interact in play together instead of separately. The most obvious nuclear example of this is the family of several children where sibling interaction fosters responsibility, care giving, role modeling, and cooperation (along with pass-me-down clothes, toys, and bicycles!).

Recognition of "Play Value" for Playground Equipment

This is presently at the preliminary "count all the play elements" stage by several manufacturers. This is a quantitative rather than qualitative approach. But there is a trend to recognize the intrinsic worthiness of play on the playground and on play apparatus. They have attempted to quantify this in the U.K. for several years now. This will be recognized more in the future at several levels:

In preschool childcare settings, playgrounds are more and more treated as an extension of the total activity center. Use of the playground is incorporated into daily programs based upon child development guidelines, rather than just as a break-time from these. A play activity or use of a specific play apparatus will become commonly recognized as a facilitator to master a given developmental skill or task.

In school settings, there has been a mixed trend: As noted earlier, there are some

school districts that are building new elementary schools without playgrounds, because they have discontinued "recess" and replace it with additional instructional time. Other schools have recognized that education of children can be more effective if delivered in time units fitting the interest span of the pupils and the children's need to "recharge their mental batteries" by rest and physical/social activity. The value of play to expend pent-up physical energy and provide this break from mental efforts is recognized by a growing number of educators.

In "Child Entertainment Centers" — CEC's — commercial establishments are incorporating the concept of packaging supervised playground with a mixture of unstructured and structured play activities. This young industry has learned that it must offer more than access to play equipment, it must capture and hold the interest of children brought to the facilities. To be successful, the CEC must encourage repeat business, it must be "fun" time after time.

Now let's examine what seems to be happening, or what designers and manufacturers are willing to share with me, regarding playground equipment in the future.

User-adjusted Playground Equipment

Remember the "Changeling" or "Transformer" robot toys? While playground equipment won't be changeable from a space ship to a submarine by pushing a couple of levers, there are plans to permit users to change difficulty levels to match physical abilities. There are prototype horizontal ladders with adjustable rung spacing and heights; push devices with adjustable tension; and panels with the capability to change from opaque to transparent settings, from blue to red to green. Sounds like a novelty or a gimmick, doesn't it? But can you think of the ultimate possibilities for user-generated challenge levels or preferences?

Portability of Equipment

There are appearing new designs of apparatus that do not require permanent footers for stability. This permits not only the seasonal moving of some equipment indoors or outdoors, but the ability to change the physical layout of several related structures, such as playhouses, into different clusters.

New Means of Anchoring (Replacing Buried Footers)

Continuation of modular construction is evolving to quick repositioning of parts

based upon "Lego" toys and interlocking techniques recently introduced by Little Tikes and other manufacturers for preschool and home play apparatus. While most of this "first generation" interlocking equipment is presently for the home market, there are some prototypes being developed that will have innovative assembly and anchoring techniques. These techniques could ultimately eliminate the hazardous concrete footers that are commonly exposed when the play surface is displaced or removed.

New Equipment Construction and Materials

Combined with these new equipment designs will be a new synthetic/metal combination — lighter, stronger, rust-free, low heat dissipation and with minimal maintenance requirements. The best way of describing this material is as a special-purpose alloy or a compound. The most familiar example of this technology is the materials used in modern cookware such as Calphalon, which was invented to be non-stick, lightweight, uniform heat dissipation, yet strong. This modern alloy will replace the steel, wood, and plastics used in playground equipment today. I am not at liberty to identify the manufacturer who will first introduce this alloy, but I can say it is not far away.

"Equipment Upgrades" Concept Based Upon Computer Software Upgrades (or Auto Leases)

Have you noticed how software is being marketed now? Once you buy the program, you can get periodic "upgrades" of the basic program for small incremental payments. Can car dealers offer fantastic lease packages so that you pay less than purchase payments and "lease up" every three years? There are a couple of manufacturers who are investigating this concept for one or two special play structures, planning to offer periodic "modular trade-ups" for play components attached to the basic unit. The change to the playground is progressive, incremental, and dynamic. Conceptually, the playground thus does not become commonplace to regular users year after year.

"Maintenance Contracts" with Manufacturer-Authorized Service Contractors

The service industry is at the brink of discovering that playground maintenance can be standardized and can be marketed as a specialty the same as building maintenance, pool operations, ball field preparation, and

golf course management. Because providers of playgrounds are proportionally changing away from public agencies, these non-public providers will contract for playground maintenance rather than invest in special equipment, labor skills, and materials. These maintenance specialists are establishing product links with manufacturers. There is a "Mr. Goodwrench" in the future of many playgrounds. I have seen the beginnings of this new industry in several cities around the United States.

"The Gated Playground"

This is a variation of the exclusive gated neighborhood, private residential subdivision or private club. Membership or guest status is required. These first-class playgrounds may be an amenity at a residential setting, such as a private subdivision, townhouse or condo development, part of a country club or an exclusive resort. They all have very high standards for development, supervision, maintenance and management.

Example: Beachers Negril Ultra All-Inclusive Resort in Jamaica, that caters to affluent American, Canadian and European families — Has 18-hour/day nursery, child-care, food service and recreation program w/highly trained staff, special children's menus, very low staff-to-participant ratios, very high inspection and maintenance criteria. They work to get repeat business and favorable recommendations by previous guests, through the very influential members of the family — the kids.

Swing Away from Extreme Emphasis Upon Safety as the Ruling Design Factor

It seems that the antonym of "fun" has become "safe." We have taken our natural concern for safety too far in many instances. The Federal CPSC Playground Safety Guidelines and even the ASTM Public Playground Equipment Safety Specification have begun to replace creativity by playground designers. Extremists and alarmists have used these performance criteria as design standards. They have been frequently narrowly interpreted by some playground safety inspectors. Organizations have conducted annual national "safety inspections: using their own very restrictive standards and raised public alarm unnecessarily. Trial attorneys have used these documents to point fingers of condemnation to designers and agencies alike. Some parents have the attitude that "my child can do no wrong; therefore the facility or the setting, the

designer, or someone else must be at fault."

But I am pleased to say that I see a beginning of a trend away from this. The narrow interpretations, the restrictive standards, the lack of acceptance of personal responsibility as parents and as individuals. These are beginning to be questioned in the media, in the courts, and by many thoughtful professionals. Safety is going to continue to be a major factor in playground equipment and site design and in playground management in the future. But it will not be THE exclusive determining factor that some have permitted it to become.

All that I've said tonight — the individual vignettes of growing trends or glimpses through the looking glass into the near future — have shown one thing to be true: Playgrounds are and will continue to be as diverse as the children who use them. There is no one "right and correct playground," no final and perfect piece of play apparatus. Just as there are many models of vehicles — sedans, coupes, sports cars, utility vehicles, pick-ups, dump trucks, fire trucks, ambulances, golf carts, ... (well, you get the picture) there must be playgrounds for different purposes. Just as green does not become everyone's complexion, just at extra large does not fit everyone, there is no single playground for the future.

I've said some things that may have been reassuring to some of you; I'm glad — maybe they will influence you to do something assertive and positive about them sometime soon.

I've said some things that may have been disturbing to some of you; I'm glad — maybe they will influence you to do something assertive and positive about them sometime soon.

I left a somewhat famous friend back east when I came out here. His name is Bill. Bill has quite a reputation. Most of you have read about Bill or heard some things he's said. I want to leave you with one of Bill's axioms: He said "The play's the thing." Yes, you're correct when you identify Bill as William Shakespeare. In Hamlet, he wrote "The play's the thing." Think about it; it's not the stage, not the playground, not the setting, but the activity. We all know it — the play's the thing.

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Men Working With Young Children — Threat or Promise?

Andy Bateman

Ask any group of childcare staff, parents, or other informed and concerned adults whether they think more men should be involved in childcare and the majority of the group will answer, "yes." Ask the same group if, as parents, they would be prepared to leave their children in a man's care and they will probably give a less positive response. This observation illustrates the gender-based perceptions and emotions that permeate the childcare environment.

This paper will explore gender bias in childcare and child protection in western, developed societies, and will show the obstacles that gender bias creates to men's involvement in childcare. I will outline some of these biased perceptions and emotions and explore how they impact on men, women, and children in childcare situations. I will suggest a redefinition of masculinity, not unlike the redefinition of femininity brought about by the feminist movement over the last thirty years, and indicate some potential benefits of such a redefinition for men, women and, most importantly, children in childcare. I believe these issues are becoming increasingly pressing as more and more men are becoming involved in work with children and more and more children are being cared for outside the family.

Historically the care and protection of children has been seen as women's work. Children have been regarded as men's property, just as women have been. In the last thirty years changes have taken place, driven by the feminist movement and by women's greater inclusion in the workforce, that have made it much more acceptable, in theory at least, that men and women should share responsibility for children equally. However, there is a perceived dilemma or contradiction which child care professionals in Europe are confronting all the time, and which they are resolving in different ways with different outcomes for children, and in accordance with different cultural attitudes.

In the broader societies in which we live, the centuries during which childcare has been seen as women's work have left a deep impression on the way we see ourselves and one another: childcare professionals of both genders have a job to do in ensuring that gender bias does not hamper their work with

Figure 1



children and each other.

Exactly what are the beliefs that are held about men and women as child caregivers? Figure #1 shows some areas in which children have needs. Experience shows that people's expectations are that men will be more likely than women to meet a young child's needs for challenge and discipline, but less likely to meet a young child's needs in most other areas. This is borne out by research done by Jytte Jensen and reported in her paper "Men as Workers in Childcare Services," published by European Childcare Network. Men's ability to meet a child's need for protection is seen as particularly lacking.

As well as this research, there is also a wealth of anecdotal evidence that can be uncovered the moment a man goes into a working environment to work with young children. Evidence of this is seen when men who work with young children meet each other away from their work situation, for example at training events, and have a chance to talk to one another. Men speak of being praised in a way that makes them feel patronized when they exhibit very basic skills such as the ability to change diapers or feed babies. They speak of being excluded from intimate care of children, either explicitly or subtly. More alarmingly, when they are the first men to work in a particular environment they may find themselves subject

to assumptions such as that they will deal with disciplinary issues, they won't deal with babies, they will do all the handy-man type work such as putting plugs on electrical appliances, mending broken toys, they will act as a

source of advice on house maintenance, they will deal with difficult, active boys all the time, play soccer outside, etc. I believe this is gender stereotyping of exactly the same kind as that experienced by women who thirty years ago decided that they would like to work, and that they would like to work in traditional men's jobs such as carpentry, garage mechanics and so-on.

More complex and of more concern are the issues which surround the sexual abuse of young children. In the U.K. sexual abuse is, at present, given a very high media profile. There is no evidence to suggest it is increasing in frequency, but in the last fifteen years a series of high profile controversial incidents have broken the barriers to discussing it. Children are being believed much more often, and the phenomenon of institutional sexual abuse has been recognized. The newspapers are full of the prosecutions of long term abusers whose crimes go back 30 or 40 years. Most relevant however to our subject is the case of Jason Dabbs. Most nurseries in the U.K. employ staff who hold the Nursery Nurses Examination Board qualification. Jason Dabbs was one of the first male N.N.E.B. students in the North East of England. In his first placement in a nursery, he worked in an open plan nursery environment with other adult staff present in the room at all times. He passed his placement, but some weeks

after he left information emerged that he had sexually abused twenty of the children for whom he was caring in the placement. He had kept them in fear and silence by telling them that he could get to them through the electric wires and they would never be safe from him. This

Table 1

WOMEN'S ROLE	AREA OF NEED	MALE ROLE
✓	Health	
✓	Protection (From Abuse)	
✓	Diet	
✓	Clothes	
	Environment	✓
✓	Safety	
✓	Comfort	
	Discipline	✓
✓	Personal care	
	Education	✓
	Challenge	✓

horrifying case got a very high profile in the U.K. press, especially the tabloid press.

The danger of sexual abuse has never been so clearly recognized in the U.K. as now. This recognition has led to vigilance in situations where children are vulnerable. Workers are now rigorously checked for previous criminal convictions that may indicate tendencies to abuse children in their care. Childcare organizations are searching for other ways to safeguard children in their care. This is admirable, especially as we know that abuse is often an addictive process and abusers may spend years working themselves into positions where they can have access to children to abuse.

Sexual abuse has certain assumptions that lead to complications. The most important of these is that **NO ONE CAN KNOW THAT ANOTHER PERSON IS NOT AN ABUSER**. It is impossible to prove a negative, and abuse by its nature is secretive, because it is taboo. The second characteristic is that **MOST SEXUAL ABUSE IS PERPETRATED BY MEN**. These two assumptions are enough to discourage men from working with young children. There is, however, a further difficulty: **MANY PEOPLE APPEAR TO BELIEVE THAT MEN CANNOT TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR SEXUALITY**.

There is evidence that this belief is to be found everywhere. A sex offender often says that his victims of whatever age or gender, "asked for it" through their dress, words or behavior - any "red-blooded man" would have done the same. It is referenced in the media, when female characters in soap operas or other dramas discuss controlling men through their sexuality. It is part of existing gender roles in our society - boys growing up are encouraged and expected to be impulsive, acting out, while girls are encouraged to be gentle, nurturing, unassertive and more in control.

If we now add to these three assumptions a fourth, that **CARING FOR CHILDREN IS NOT CONSIDERED TO BE A NORMAL MASCULINE BEHAVIOUR**, a situation arises that creates an atmosphere of mistrust towards any man who works with young children. How is this mistrust expressed in practice?

The following are some examples of how this mistrust is expressed in practice:

1. A male worker from the Sheffield Children's Centre was temporarily allocated to another Agency's children's service at

their request because they had no male staff. A child later came to the provision who had previously been subject to child sexual abuse and was now in the process of adoption. The adoptive parents approached the female manager and requested that this man refrain from any interaction with the child, fearing that the child might exhibit sexualized behavior towards him. The manager directed the other staff (female) to interpose themselves between the male worker and the child so no interaction could occur. The male worker was not involved in making this decision, nor was he informed of it. Consequently, the male worker was singled out as potentially threatening. He subsequently withdrew because he found the situation too stressful to deal with - it had been assumed he could not do his job properly because of his gender.

2. In a community project, a male manager was invited to watch a ballet class of young girls dancing in leotards. As he sat watching them, a local inspector from child protection arrived. Through a small window in the hall door she observed him watching the girls for about ten minutes. She then took him to task, saying that watching little girls for so long was behavior that aroused suspicion. The issue was raised with unprofessional haste; whereas gentle and relaxed inquiries could have quickly established why the man was watching the girls. The child protection worker's perceptions were clouded by her suspicion.

3. In a project in Scotland, a male trainee was doing a placement. A photocopy of the tabloid press coverage of the Jason Dabbs' nursery case, referred to earlier in this paper, appeared on the notice board one morning, causing considerable discomfort for the trainee.

To sum up what I have suggested so far:

- There is ambivalence in many western societies towards men's involvement in work with children.
- Men are assumed to be less competent than women as caregivers for young children.
- Men who do choose to do such work move into situations where they will usually be subject to suspicion.

I'd like to shift the focus now to real situations, in which men find themselves working. Reference to a survey of 56 family centers in the U.K. (What's He Doing in the Family Centre? S. Ruxton, NCH Action for

Children, 1992) indicates that of responding projects, 49% had no male staff, 39% had only one, and 12% had two male workers. This suggests, and experience confirms, that the majority of men who work in childcare provisions have no male colleagues in their workplaces.

The same research project quotes K. Seifert, (1974) "Some Problems of Men in Child Care Centre Work." "The male childcare worker can expect his biggest problems in staff relations. In sociological terms, he clearly suffers from 'status inconsistency.' He is a man, but he is doing work usually considered 'feminine.' The women who work with him may experience some discomfort in reconciling these facts."

Seifert suggests that women will tend to deal with this by deciding that the man with whom they work is 'special' or 'exceptional.' Conversations with men in childcare have shown that in almost every case female colleagues view them as "special." If men working with young children accept that they are different from other men they undermine their own masculine identity and withdraw their challenge to existing sexual stereotypes, becoming "the exception that proves the rule." If they do not accept their differentness from other men they undermine their sense of their own potential as childcare workers and may underachieve in work as a consequence. They lack confidence because they are, after all, men and everyone knows that men can't look after children as competently as women.

Ruxton's (1992) interviews suggested that men were content to accept their non/masculine "special" status.

'One interviewee said how pleased he was to have been described as one of the girls.' Another commented that: 'I get told a lot of personal details. ... It's almost as if I'm not a man. I don't feel in any way disabled by that, more accepted because of it.' In my opinion, these two interviewees have clearly decided to make the best of what has been offered to them: for them the price of acceptance has been well worth paying.

The responses of black and gay workers to similar processes of negotiating acceptance are illuminating.

One black worker stated, "One of the things I fear is people who say 'you're alright.' What they're saying is that they haven't got anything against me, it's others like me ... and yet I'm not like the others. I fit in."

Ruxton (1992) saw this difference in response as reflecting the fact that there are more male workers in childcare now, making it easier to 'navigate status inconsistencies.' I disagree with Ruxton's position. I believe accepting the 'special' label means giving up a piece of one's identity. For white males, whose identity is favored in many areas of life, giving up this identity is a small sacrifice, not even noticed. For black and gay workers who have to fight constantly to have their identities recognized and appreciated, it is more keenly felt and resisted. I find it interesting that the most stereotypically masculine man whom I have encountered working in childcare is one who has most embraced his special status, proudly boasting of his privileged acceptance in the 'inner sanctum' of the staff team of women he manages. I believe he has chosen a personal solution to his very difficult situation which maintains his personal autonomy at the expense of limiting the sharpness of his challenge to gender stereotyping. Every time he celebrates his special status he reinforces the stereotype that his actions challenge.

In addition to the issue of identity, mixed teams also have to deal with issues of stereotyping and antistereotyping. Some teams organize centers so that male staff members always play football outside with the big boys, never work with babies, never change nappies, never work in home corner. Others attempt to achieve absolute parity of "masculine" and "feminine" work between the genders, insisting male and female staff does work with which they are not comfortable. Neither of these seems to be satisfactory ways of operating. A child-centered approach to resolving these issues as team issues is preferable. Individual workers have skills and preferences that need to be recognized, including their gender implications in terms of the messages they send to the children. For example, it is sufficient from a child's point of view to see one male worker cooking to challenge that child's belief that men don't cook. If challenging gender stereotyping is an issue considered by the whole team, then joint decisions can be negotiated, rather than pushing all staff members into rigid anti-stereotypical strait-jackets.

A further issue that arises in work places is the issue of touch. This issue connects directly with abuse issues, which we've looked at earlier. Because men are seen

more and more often as potential abusers, touching children has become more and more difficult for them. It is difficult to overestimate how important and emotive an issue this is, for male workers, female workers and children. To begin to explore this, try to imagine a nursery, or perhaps even more dramatically, a family, in which no one ever touched another person. A male worker interviewed by Ruxton said 'We've got into a situation where we are protecting our backs at all times. At one project where I used to work, when I was working with a young girl I always had to make sure that a female member of staff was present. It's almost like setting yourself up ... giving the children the idea that all men are abusers. 'Don't you dare come anywhere near me, you're not allowed...'

Nursery Inspectors to whom I have spoken have revealed a tendency to scrutinize male staff's touching of children in a way that they do not scrutinize female workers' touch - how long it goes on, what is it for, is it necessary? In a paper on 'Men as Workers in Professional Childcare Settings: An Anti-Oppressive Practice Framework,' Keith Pringle (1997) suggests adaptations to men's professional practice. 'Many of these adaptations to men's practice will be relatively small (for example perhaps men workers avoiding touch as far as possible in communicating with children).'

There is widespread agreement amongst childcare professionals that a child's need for physical contact is a vital one, and that touch is essential in the development of physiological functions and emotional stability and trust. In a paper by A. Ward, entitled 'The Role of Physical Contact in Childcare' (Children's Aid Society, 1990) three dilemmas are identified.

1. How to know what sort of touching to use and when; also how to know when touching is not appropriate.

2. How to use touch in a planned way without losing spontaneity.

3. How to lessen the risk of touch being misinterpreted.

I would identify a fourth:

4. How to deal appropriately with sexualized behavior from children.

While it is not easy for men to resolve these four dilemmas, to do so by withdrawing from meeting children's need for touch, as Pringle suggests, seems likely to have a very negative effect for at least four reasons.

Withdrawal will affect men by cutting

them off from the possibility of including everyday tenderness and emotional care in their relationships with children. More seriously, children, who are always watchful and aware in their desire to answer questions for themselves about gender differences and what it means to be male or female will see what happens and draw conclusions. Processes, which may be going on in children's family life from which they are learning that girls should always be caring, nurturing and sensitive and that boys should always be tough and uncaring, will be reinforced. Abusive processes in some families in which the children learn to associate male touch with brutality and invasion will not be challenged. Children will be denied an opportunity to negotiate physical relationships with male staff in a safe and caring environment. Children who have been abused benefit greatly from the opportunity to set their own boundaries in relationship with a man and have these boundaries respected.

Young boys also often express their need for physical intimacy through rough and tumble play in which female staff rarely engages. Tom Reed of the University of South Carolina Spartanburg explored this area in more depth in his Ph.D. thesis. As I understand it, his thesis is that rough and tumble play is the only avenue open to boys over the age of about seven to arrive at physical intimacy with their peers or with adult males. If this avenue is blocked, the boys' own capacity for physical expression of tenderness may atrophy possibly with dangerous consequences.

Finally children will notice the withdrawal of touch and it will send them a powerful message about what can and cannot be expected of men in society. This will impact particularly on young boys, discouraging them from acting in a caring and tender way to others and from identifying caring and tender behavior with masculinity.

Probably the most complex issue in the workplace however is the issue of power. Childcare is an area where for centuries most of the day to day power has rested with women (although they have exercised that power mostly inside structures defined by men). I believe this holds true today in nearly all child care provisions. It is true that men in this field tend to show an accelerated rate of promotion to management relative to women, but the involvement of men is so recent and on such a small scale that the man-

agement positions they hold tend to isolate them from working with children. This power impinges on male workers in different ways, through patterns of communication and issues of acceptance. Issues connected with the prevalence of prejudice in wider society and its impact on some provisions through the power of the market are also impacted.

Male workers in childcare face a different pattern of communication than the one they are used to. The idea that there are gender differences in communication is now widely accepted. Male workers may become excluded from effective, subtle decision making of a group of female colleagues because they cannot keep up with the discussion, because it depends on a set of shared assumptions that the women workers have worked out with each other over months or years of shared work. This often leads to female workers feeling very frustrated and male worker feeling de-skilled. This situation has been described to me a number of times.

Male workers in childcare also face their need to be accepted by the group with which they work. This acceptance may be very conditional. I referred earlier to the tendency for men who work with young children to be viewed as "special." This "special" status is one that the group can withdraw from men at any time. Jytte Jensen's work, referred to earlier, showed that men bring different values and emphases than women to their work. These differences lead inevitably to conflict, negotiation, and change. However, this process of fitting in may be shut down completely by the withdrawal of men's acceptance into the group. It should come as no surprise to find that this occurs. It is an echo of the processes encountered by women as they made their way into work areas that had been the exclusive preserve of men.

A further issue of power encountered by male workers in childcare is the power of service users. Service users have different amounts of power in different services, but they have in common the same set of assumptions and experiences that exist in wider society. This is reflected in their attitudes towards men working with their children. Talking with men in the U.K. working in different situations I have found that a pattern emerges. Where there is a high degree of dependency of the users on the service (for example, where families are

referred by Social Services) men who work with children are accepted without question and managers support them confidently. However, where service users are customers and have choices between different services, male workers and their managers feel much more vulnerable. Service users may make demands that are difficult for providers to satisfy. For example, in one after school scheme parents insisted that there always is a female member of staff on duty. These and other similar demands will inevitably have implications for employment opportunities for men who do wish to work with young children.

Table 2 (see following page) shows in brief form the problematic issues I believe impinge on men, and the degree of contrast that exists between their experience of work in childcare and that of women. It is not encouraging to those who believe that the work of caring for children should be equally shared. It may help us to understand this by revisiting the experience of the feminist movement of the late sixties and early seventies. Women in that period saw themselves as redefining the feminine - extending the boundaries of what it means to be a woman. Until then many areas of work, behavior, and social life had been closed off to them, and considered appropriate for men only. Women were not garage mechanics or construction workers or engineers. It was unacceptable for them to seek out actively the male partner of their choice. Seeking out of a female partner was even less acceptable. They were excluded from many social institutions, either tacitly or explicitly.

Pioneering women found it necessary to learn new skills and behaviors. They needed to overcome barriers inside themselves, to become more assertive, to change their views about themselves and about the world. I have no doubt that this has led over the last thirty years to a major shift in culture, at least in the U.K. Young women in the U.K. are still disadvantaged by social structures that discriminate against them, but they have a confidence and self esteem for which women of my generation have had to fight.

Men are faced with a challenge in society, particularly in the area of childcare and relationships with children: the challenge of redefining and expanding the boundaries of what it means to be a man. Men tend not to consider themselves as members of a gender most of the time because their dominance in

society has, for centuries, been so complete. More often we have perceived women as strange deviations from the "normal" people we men are. This dominance has been complete for so long that men have had no reason to consider the way in which gender stereotyping impinged on them. This is especially true because gender stereotyping has in most areas delivered benefits to men. The complacency generated by this and combined with the tendency for men to act unreflectively has led men to take their place in society for granted. However, while both genders are being forced by social change to adapt to new situations, it is clear men are losing out, particularly in relation to children, because the existing definitions of what it is to be a man limits them. Men do not believe, for example that they can parent independently of women, so that in the U.K. the majority of fathers are out of contact with their children within three years of separation from the mother.

If masculinity is to be redefined, then men who choose to work with young children are among those who are, by their choices, redefining it, whether they consciously seek to do so or not. It is in the nature of the existing male role that men who work with children will be less ready to discuss difficulties with others than their female colleagues will. Some measure of the difficulties they face can be appreciated if I point out that in the U.K. a number of networks have been built by and for men who work with young children, in order to enable them to offer each other support. In Scotland the network has succeeded in attracting funding and in 1998 is just beginning to produce its first pamphlet, to which I am contributing.

The only model we have for the process of redefining a gender is the Women's Movement. In that case the process seems to have consisted of:

1. Women becoming dissatisfied with their role.
2. Women coming together and spending time recognizing and redefining their own potential and what obstacles existed to achieving it together.
3. Women moving those ideas out into the world, through career choices, political campaigns, workplace campaigns, conferences, and writing among others.
4. Society, and both men and women, changing and adapting to meet the demands of the feminist movement through changed

expectations and practical provision and support, and being enriched as a result.

Redefinition of masculinity is a different process because in most areas of life to be masculine is to be high status, and the pressures that act against the redefinition don't have powerful entrenched economic interests driving them. Experience has convinced me, however, that men need to talk to one another and find strength and independence through sharing their experience as men. I also believe that this process of sharing does not happen easily between men, because of the limiting effect of the existing definition of masculinity. If the potential of men to take an equal share in the care and protection of children is to be realized, some conscious development work is needed.

The benefits of men working with children is covered at length in Jensen's paper for the EEC. I believe that men working with young children helps undermine rigid gender stereotypes, provides positive alternative role models for young boys who may have none, provides for girls, especially girls who have been abused, access to a relationship with a man in which the girl can have power and gain confidence, and brings into young children's lives the qualities and characteristics men have in the world, and men's priorities in childcare. It also makes available to both boys and girls an example that shows it is possible to choose careers and lifestyles that transcend gender stereotypes.

As men take their share in child protection and move closer to children, I believe it will become increasingly difficult for men to objectify children. One of the positive characteristics of men is their desire to discuss, see, and decide objectively and not emotionally. If this is not balanced by a willingness to feel and relate emotionally, the desire for objectivity may lead to treating others as objects and abusing whatever power the man has. I believe that this ability to objectify is one of the key components in the abuse process, and that the process of redefining masculinity as a more tender, loving way of being will help lessen the incidence of child sexual abuse. Abuse and its implications for male workers in childcare are an issue I have barely touched. I have dealt with it in more detail in a paper entitled "Child Protection, Risk, Allegations" which I presented to a European Seminar held by the Thomas Coram Institute last year.

What needs to be done? Workers and managers in childcare need specific training that addresses these issues. Male workers need support to reconcile the desire to assert that child abuse has nothing to do with them personally with the fact that their work requires dealing with understandable suspicions and fears from colleagues and service users. All staff, especially managers, needs training in dealing with the gender issues that can arise in work teams. Organizations need to develop policies that address the existence of male workers. Networks of men working in childcare need to be built. Training institutions and service providers need to recruit men in a more aggressive way. In the U.K. childcare is still being advertised as work for women. Change is

arrows indicate the shift of elements such as earning a living from being gender specific to being characteristic of either gender. I believe that the shifting of further elements from either side into the shared column furthers human progress. (See Table 3)

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Table 2

MEN	ISSUE	WOMEN
Society does not expect this of me Most of my colleagues are women, unlike me My friends are surprised by what I do I have to adapt to get along with work group I feel vulnerable-I worry about being misinterpreted Colleagues and service users may see my sexuality as threatening Not trusted-hard to have confidence I help women protect children My acceptance is problematic No one here seems to think or talk like me	Caring for Children Touch Sexuality Abuse, Child Protection Relations with parents Communication	It is normal for me to do this Most of my colleagues are women like me My friends accept what I do without comment My work group reflects concerns of my gender I touch children as it seems appropriate My sexuality is not an issue I protect children from abusive men Men do that not me I am accepted It is easy to communicate here

Table 3

MALE ROLE	SHARED	FEMALE ROLE
Manual labor		Emotional work
Mending machines		Caring for sick
Blue collar worker		Establishing intimacy
Discipline	Home making	Home making
Sexual pursuit		Keeping children safe
Earning a living	Earning a living	Practical organization
Formal decision making	Formal decision making	Identifying with others
Abstract thinking	Abstract thinking	Sensitivity
Risk taking	Sense of style	Sense of style
Dreaming -big ideas		Passion
Tolerance		Realism
Promotable	Promotable	Desire of family
Independent	Independent	Care of appearance Dependent

under way and I believe we should support it because it will enlarge our horizons and make our relationships and our children's lives safer and freer.

The table illustrates my personal perception of the shifts that have occurred in gender roles over the last thirty years. The

The Playground as Therapeutic Space: Playwork as Healing

Perry Else and Gordon Sturrock

This paper presents a new description of play and playwork, which is intended to aid understanding of the process of play and the resulting benefits of playing. The description promotes the concept that play is the process by which children develop their bodies and their minds. An incomplete play cycle may lead to a breakdown in the child at several levels. The paper concludes with some implications for the practice of playworkers. Adapted from the full paper for the IPA/USA Conference Presentation June 1998.

Introduction

"Chinese baseball is played almost exactly like American baseball: same field, players, bats, and balls, method of scoring, and so on. The batter stands in the batter's box, as usual. He winds up, as usual, and zips the ball down the alley. There is only one difference: after the ball leaves the pitcher's hand, and as long as the ball is in the air, anyone can move any of the bases anywhere (Donaldson, 1993, p.107)." People who work in play would have an experience of that playfulness when a game of Chinese baseball was in full sway, but how would they be able to describe what was happening to others?

In the UK, there is a common way of describing play using the word SPICE which stands for Social, Physical, Imaginative (Intellect), Creative, Emotional (behaviors). We could say that when the game of Chinese baseball was in full sway we would see these behaviors:

- * Social: children co-operating and competing as a team
- * Physical: children running about, hitting and catching the ball
- * Imaginative (or intellect): children thinking where to go next
- * Creative: children using creative ways of competing with the other team
- * Emotional: children being happy in victory or sad in defeat

However, could we say where those experiences had come from? Alternatively, could we describe to a learning playworker how to support play with a group of children? When we ask why these behaviors occur, the answer tends to be: because that is what we see. Certainly, in my own case when

describing the purpose of play to others, I would argue for play as a child's right. When asked to explain play, I would talk about the manifest behaviors but I could not describe what I felt was really happening in play. Telling playworkers to play Chinese baseball may be useful but it is not the whole of the story. This idea will be expanded within this presentation.

In our opinion, the position of playworker in the United Kingdom at present is at a critical point. Playwork has failed to flourish for the following reasons:

- * our inability to constitute the functions of playwork as a widely accepted discipline
- * our failure to carry off any kind of successful campaign or political lobby
- * the rise of playcare as a solution to the social problem of the working parent
- * the inability of the field itself to take on and advance the movement through meaningful research and development

Work in play is increasingly presented as a form of childcare practice and is based on early years education. Playwork has been unable to offer an alternative to playcare's justification in terms of social need. However within play, there remain two schools of thought: those looking for soft forms of social control, and those looking for deeper comprehension of what our contact with children at play might mean. It is this latter that we are concerned with. We are aiming for recognition of play as having a child-ordinated, healing potentiality with which we work.

Our ideas were developed within a particular working context; that is, playwork as it is understood in the UK within, particularly, adventure playgrounds. These are secure spaces with boundaries where children choose and order their own playing. They are staffed with experienced playworkers, usually include natural features and child and worker built play structures).

In an environment where the natural space for play (both physical and psychic) is steadily being eroded, we see increasing signs of breakdown and disease.

Playsites are coming to serve as 'authorized' grounds for children's play. In these sites, the work of the adult/playworker is required to fulfil a more curative function

than has been acknowledged to date. It is from this new viewpoint that we suggest that playspace should now be seen as therapeutic space and playwork advanced as having an unexplored, healing potential.

The application

In this paper, we describe playwork in new forms with a new vocabulary. However, we believe we are only saying what many playworkers have felt to be the essential exchanges of their work. We have attempted to state these in terms that are more precise. Everyone working in play may have to face the fact that the idea of playwork is undergoing change. The threat of a descent into soft policing and social control is very real. We argue for a more reflective, contemplative, kind of working, and a more systematic application. This entire construct, and the overall approach that emerges, views play practice from a more interpretative and analytic perspective: a generalized proposition that might more properly be termed psycholudics, the study of the mind or psyche at play.

Our thesis rests on one essential proposition: prior to each act of creativity of the child lies an imaginative realm or zone that is playful (ludic) and symbolically constituted. The playworker joins and works with this zone of emergent material and content. The consequence of all this is that in the play encounter, the drive which is active in the play setting is contained and reflects, or is reflected back, to the child or player. When recognition of this issue and response fails, we get forms of dysplay. We ask if the hybrid, maladapted play cycle is the kernel of neurosis? We argue that the playworker is active at the precise point where potential neuroses are being formed. In this light, could playwork be seen as being curative? Our responses to these questions form the core of this paper.

Some conceptual considerations on play and the ludic

It is a common to read that play has some essence that is hard to define some indescribable quality. Naturally, playworkers embrace this quality and find great passion and satisfaction in play. Many others avoid this emotional content and focus on the need to educate our children to face a future

which they can only fearfully intuit. In recent years in the UK this led to a debate about playwork being about the management of children's behavior. With this management or education, we believe we adulterate or pollute an area that we describe as a ludic ecology.

This paper is our attempt to outline an idea of play within a new paradigm. We suggest that the purpose of play is precisely in what might be termed a consciousness, seen, as Pierce has it, as the 'behavior of behaviors.' Or put another way, as an awareness that is the prefiguring (but always present) element of all creativity. The playwork schema that follows rests on an understanding of play as being a drive active in a frame of a particular nature. It further suggests that at the deeper levels of functioning, the child will be expressing, in symbolic form, unconscious material crucial to their psychic development. The task of the playworker may be to consider and develop an interpretative or analytic perspective out of which to issue their responses. It is the consistent operation of this response that most clearly marks the work of the playworker.

The play process

The cyclic processes of play are often referred to but have not been set into a coherent formulation; the most common descriptions adhere to simple explanations of creation and destruction. These need to be considerably enlarged. We propose the following formula as being more accurate of the looping cycle of play, seen and understood as a drive. For our purposes, the play process has four, key, functional components.

These are:

* M-L: the metalude from which the drive or cue to play is issued to the environment.

* T>: the termination or decay; the breakdown of this drive over time.

* @: the active development; the response to the play cue by the environment or another player.

* §: the loop and flow; the response is picked up, processed and acted on in the

metaludic space.

The resulting formula expresses the play or ludic cycle (L) thus: $L = (M-L, T>, @, §)$, where if @ or § are absent the cycle ends.

The essential task of the playworker is to be in service of this process as it unfolds M-L, decays T>, or is developed @ in the playing child.

Playwork actions and interventions can be understood and perfected around an essential understanding of the various phases of this ludic cycle. The playworker must 'co-operate intelligently' with the cyclic, playing processes of the child or children. A detailed explanation of this process and the parts within it follows.

The play drive or ludido (based on the work of Gordon Sturrock and Stephen Rennie, 1997)

We know that all mammals and many animals play. Play therefore is more than simply a behavior; there is a deeper motivation serving biological and existential purposes. The driven energy of play is not just expended or spent, it is effectively an issue and response, ludic, feedback loop. The cycle can be seen in the cues that the child issues to the surrounding environment, objects or other people and the returning material that is composed in the play frame. It is more than a mere rehearsal for adulthood; it is instead a series of playful investigations that form the life-world of the child and his/her sense of identity and self.

We suggest, as a distinct playwork definition, that the ludido, the play drive, could be seen precisely as the active agency of an evolving consciousness in what we call a 'field' or psychic, ludic ecology.

The metalude

The metalude is one of the most intangible but important areas of the working practice of the playing child and the adult/practitioner active in that play. As it is crucial to what follows, we provide a lengthy description of its relevance and validity to our task. For the essential construction of our thesis we draw on much of the work of Winnicott and a number of other analysts and therapists, but we feel it important to state that the reference point, for the main part, is out of our direct experience of playwork practice.

A part of the play drive or ludido is sustained in a deeply internalized form of fantasy play, which we observed and have confirmed out of our work in play practice and in therapies. This internalized zone is variously described, most notably by Winnicott,

who called it the 'third area' and 'the potential space'. He invested it principally with qualities from his psychoanalytic, object relations, perspective.

Children at play are 'alive in the moment', with no concern for the past or future. They engage in the production and sharing of internalized gestalts. Playworkers discern these gestalts through experiential insight; they feel them, even if the external, physical evidence is slight. Most playworkers have seen children for whom play is everything taking them beyond meal times, sleep times and even toilet times!

The encounter of the child and the adult in any play setting involves, in part, an overlapping of this gestalted material. In some cases, the child's and the playworker's effects become merged to form a new intra-subjective identity; a gestalted mutuality created between the child and playworker. This happens when people play together and 'get lost' in their play. Most playworkers have felt this experience but have not had words to describe it. We attempt to put words to these experiences.

We say that these formations first appear in what we call the metaludic space of play. (This can also be the case with a group where there would be a collective, overlapping mutuality; the point being that the 'getting lost' is expanded to the group.) Playwork practice may require an involvement sensitised to contact with this subtle emerging material and its issuing center.

Recent developments in psychoanalytic discourse suggest this 'center' as being the source of all curative, therapeutic outcomes. A cure or healing that therapists steadfastly maintain is constituted in their own interpretative practice, Freudian, Kleinian, or whatever. We suggest that it is the act of playing that has the healing inherent in it. I will return to this point later.

The ludic ecology

Current descriptions of the life-world and development of identity and self have not been fully appreciated by the playwork discipline. Neither have they begun, as yet, to influence our disciplinary discourse. Russell Meares (1993) puts the point well:

"The play of the very young child has peculiar characteristics that include the relationship with the other, the form of language, and an absorption in the activity that is similar to that of an adult who is lost in thought. The field of play is where, to a large extent, a sense of self is generated (p. 5)."

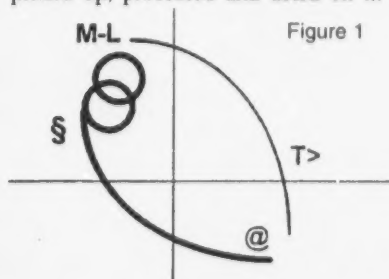
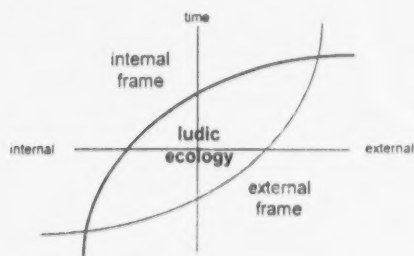


Figure 1

This field is the ethereal stage, the play frame, the potential space that incorporates internal symbolic representations and external artifacts, objects and others; these serve to mirror and reflect the internalized drama or narrative of the child.

It is at the precise point of this encounter, the internalized play space of the child and its meeting with the external world that the playworker sits poised. This is the 'field' that we call the ludic ecology. This is not a solid formation, it is a mobile, flexible extension, where options, ideas, themes, change, and adapt as they come in contact with the surrounding, and containing, environment.

Figure 2



Much can be interpreted by a sensitive playworker from the child's exploitation of external play objects, in conjunction with themes, magic or mythic material, and narrative constructs coming out of this delicate internal zone. This interplay we propose should be seen as a ludic consciousness. Edith Cobb (1994), describes it as, "The child's urge to 'body forth the forms of things unknown (p. 94)." To extend further the metaphor, we might perceive the child's play universe and the meeting with the external world as a flexible, holistic, and ludic process. This totality we see as being a psychic, non-physical, ludic ecology.

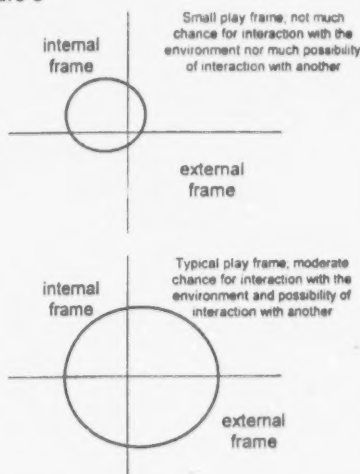
By 'reading' the inherent encounter and the subsequent balancing, the resulting adaptation and adjustment processes, playworkers can contribute to the child's development in a way that is child-centered, and encourage the self-healing potentials of play to take effect.

The play frame

Within the generalized summaries of playwork, there are well considered and articulated descriptions of some of the play frames that the child encounters. These have tended to be concerned with the physical aspects of the playground and play setting. There are, however, any numbers of subtle

overlapping frames occurring simultaneously, to which the playworker must be sensitive. These frames are not merely physical but are projected or 'thrown' fantasy. They can extend from the tiniest and most intimate to groups of children ranging across the wide-open spaces of some of our larger playgrounds, where the entire space is the frame of the play. The duration of these frames can be literally seconds to many weeks, even months. The frame will last as long as it has relevance and meaning for the projected play form of the child. The most important function of the frame is that it provides the context or stage where the play form is enacted.

Figure 3



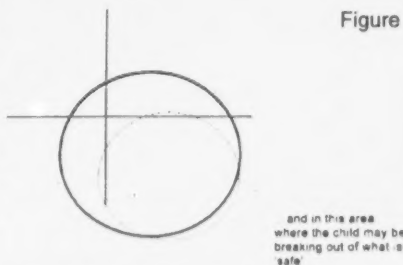
The frame is in effect the enclosure for the child's imaginative expression. It is chosen and initiated by the child and is a retainer for meaning and a reflective vehicle for this meaning. It has a functional requirement to provide return. The play frame becomes ineffective, ruptured, or decayed, when it can no longer offer this return. Arnold Modell, describes this contradictory necessity, thus, "Ritualized rules of the game demarcate or frame a reality that is separated from that of ordinary life." This not something that Winnicott wrote about; but his theory of playing illustrates a profound paradoxical truth: the freedom of play, that is, the freedom to create, exists only by means of constraint. The play frame could therefore be viewed as a child initiated non-material; constraint or boundary that helps define and give meaning to play content.

Containment

The frame is the play boundary of the child. Containment is the 'holding' function of the playworker.

Again, this has largely been understood as being referenced to the purely physical aspects of the work, the site as a container, and has been taken to an extreme in play-care. Our proposition is a greatly enlarged idea akin to Winnicott's notion of the 'holding' environment.

Figure 4



We suggest that the play drive will need, from time to time, a holding or containing environment. This is necessary during particular phases in the ludic loop of playing, most crucially to prevent a descent into the deconstructive, destructive phase of playing, or at its completed annihilation; that is, when the play value of a frame or theme is spent.

For example, if the child extends its frame beyond what is safe, the playworker may need to contain the play so that the child comes to no harm. We could say that the child has extended the play frame so that it is no longer in touch with its own feelings about the experience; they have stopped feeling the fear. Playworkers could help initiate a closing or ending ritual that helps the child learn from the experience.

In containment, the playworker maintains the reflective integrity of the 'play frame' of the child. The task is in recognizing and preserving the meaning of the play at that time. At some point, containment may alter when the attendant playworker, 'reading' the playful exchanges of the child, will enter the interrupted, decayed, disrupted cycle of play, and 'hold' or 're-frame' the play form with the children. Obviously, this is a delicate and sensitive task and open to many kinds of adulteration, but it is one we see as being central to the judgement and skills of playwork practice.

Playwork practice in the UK is generally for children between the ages of five to fourteen years. By this time children may already be exhibiting dysfunctional or anti-social behavior, or may simply have not had the chance to play enough. Playwork practice for this age range should be a way of supporting their play to help them find cura-

tive solutions for themselves in a non-threatening environment. Some playworkers have found that providing play environments for extreme children helps them to act out their difficulties. We would say it is the act of playing that has helped in the process and not the provision of the environment itself.

Play cues (after Rennie and Sturrock)

Observations of the child at play from the very earliest days of life show that they issue series of subtle cues to the surrounding environment. Response is a necessity, the mother/child interactions being the original 'set' for this circulation. The play cue is the lure or invitation from the child to the surrounding environment to join in play productions of one sort or another. The playworker, when interacting with the child, albeit at later developmental stages, is required to respond to these cues in a variety of ways. Understanding this process largely informs the intervention strategies we propose.

If we recognize that play is a form of con-

sciousness, the play cue is the signal for the world to engage with the child's developing sense of self and 'reality things as they are'. From the responses or constructions generated, the child's life-world evolves. Sidoli and Davis (1988), suggest the importance of the play constructed life-world when they say that: "Playing and pretending are like a halfway house between inner and outer reality. It could be said that the quality of life depends on how far we are able to play out and live what is within us (p. 91)." It is playing that gives us quality of life; it is the quality of playing that gives children a chance to learn, or a chance to cure their psychic pain. As playwork has not attributed to the play process this level of potency, it is vital that we reconsider the effects of intervention and involvement in the play of the child. Our very presence may have some impact throughout the cycle, but at some stages, it becomes more critical than at others. For example in the earliest phases of the playing process, after the period of decay, destruction, or annihilation, children are exposed

and vulnerable while they issue play cues to enjoy the commencement of the next build up in the playing cycle. The cue may not be a positive prompt. It could be the issuance of emotion or anxiety. It may be seen as attention seeking or misbehavior. The concerned playworker should be able to read and respond to all these cues in a manner appropriate to this interplay. Play cues are issued with the expectation of response or return and when this does not take place, frustration occurs; the play cycle can become corrupted or aberrant. It is this aberrant or hybrid cycle that is the source of dysplay.

The issued play cue, the driven aspect of the child's play behavior is not simply dissipated energy. It is a form of seeking, of issue and return, it is a feedback loop. For the greater part, this cycle is self-supporting and ordinated. The playworker must have a repertoire of responses to the play cue if they are to work effectively in the child's playspace.

Play return

In existing playwork practice, there has been a concentration on physical practicalities. This priority may need to be greatly enlarged. We say that part of the playwork task is to evaluate the playground and all its artifacts in their potential to provide return for the child's play intentions.

* Are the structures, as well as offering challenge, designed and built so as to provide potential for intimacy, for concealment, can the children be 'hidden'?

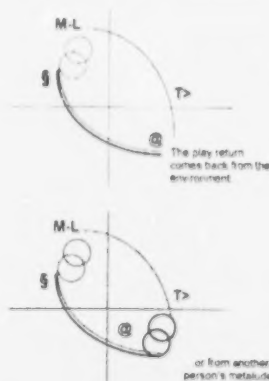
* Is the art, the representations on the walls, surfaces, the colors, motifs, and the potential for meaning that they hold, properly considered?

* Are they iconic?

* Is there space for the child's own adaptations and contributions?

* Is the play fruitful and fulfilling, is the full expression of the play cycle being met?

Figure 6



* Are the meanings that the children seek capable of being held and developed by the staff?

* Are the workers able to amplify this meaning?

* Are the 'meanings' that emerge from the children's play their own and not those of the staff?

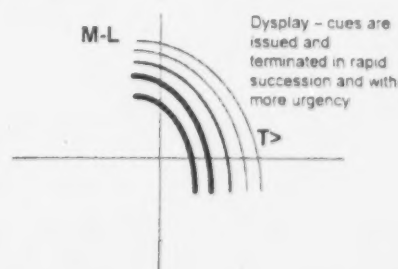
The play return is the material that the playworker introduces to extend or enhance the symbolic constructs of the children's play. It could be viewed as the appropriateness of the worker's responses to the various themes and motifs that the children uncover and express.

We may have to come to terms with the fact that play returns contribute to a micro-mythology of the play setting. This mythology is the tales that the children tell themselves about the site as a whole, or parts of the site, and the others, staff and children, in it. What to us adults may be a gravel path, to children in the thrall of their fantasy construction, may be a raging torrent to be forded. It is in the appreciation of the setting and its ability to be so transmuted, its 'magical' propensity, that the notion of return must be understood. There can be no absolute description for effective play return. It is a condition that will always be in flux and movement. This means that we, as part of our working practice, should develop an awareness of its continuance, being able to form, moment to moment, judgements about our involvement in the play cycle.

Dysplay

Where the cycle of play is greatly disturbed, terminated or contaminated, where the child, for whatever reason, is 'stuck' at some part of the play loop, there is the possibility of dysfunctional or hybrid forms of play beginning to emerge. We term this dysplay: the child or the group of children are unable, for whatever reason, to play out, fully to express the meaning of their particular play. The full cycle of play is not being engaged. The play process can be used as a

Figure 7



diagnostic tool where this display can be observed. We believe that so-called hyperactive children are stuck in the metaludic/annihilation (M-L. T>) phase of the ludic cycle, in what we term a 'hybrid' or 'false' cycle.

Our experience shows that intervention by a sensitive playworker, where the hyperactive (or ADD/ADHD child), assured that the cues were being understood and responded to, were able to frame their play and the emergent gestalts of the third phase, projective action (@), were entered into. They then enacted through the loop and flow (fl), the full play cycle. As an almost immediate result, the firing off of cues, the hyperactivity, slowed down and adjusted to normal periodicity. Playworkers should be able to use the play cycle to underpin their understanding of the play process and accordingly make their interventions and judgements within this framework. It is when the playworker does not enter into the play frame of these children that they become more anxious and conflict tends to arise between the child and another. Occasionally the worker can misuse this framework.

Adulteration

Due to one of the essential elements of the play interchange (that is, the entry of the adult into a gestalt mutuality, a shared space with the child), the adult enjoys certain power and privilege. There is a danger that the play aims and objects of the children become contaminated by, either the wishes of the adult in an urge to 'teach' or 'educate', simply to dominate, or by the worker's own unplayed out material. As Gaston Bachelard says, "One does not dream with taught ideas."

In adulteration, the play themes or narra-

sal has taken place; the children now contain the play frame of adult practitioner. The playwork group as a matter of normal course should accept that they are required to use each other as a team to reflect on, analyze and evaluate, interplay exchanges in general and in particular, where they see contamination beginning to appear. There is also a positive aspect to this reflection.

Association and amplification

If the playworker practices in a reflective continuum, then there is a need for a method that can follow the deepening of the play event into more empathic play experiences. We suggest a notion broadly borrowed from analytical psychology, namely, association and amplification. An element of the associative playwork task may be to 'make ample' the imagery, ideas and symbols of the child's enacted play. It is likely that these forms will extend well beyond the narrow cultural base upon which much present play practice is constituted. The need for containment and return may well reside in the amplification, through the particular culture, of the material being presented.

It is legitimate that we can analytically interpret a situation, where a child may be representing through symbolic form, matters, images and aspects of their emerging consciousness. An understanding of this material adds to the ability of playworkers making judgements about play intervention and the content of the child's play. Within the play context true equality of opportunity lies in the fullest possible exploration of the child's developing consciousness through the various symbolic and mythic forms they may give utterance to, or create. By extending our own knowledge, we are able to help children from all cultures with playful expression. For example, workers from a Christian culture may be repulsed by barbaric acts played out by children from another culture. Knowledge of that culture may help the workers recognize that those children are merely using symbols from their own home culture and that it would be unhealthy to repress that play.

Authenticity

Playworkers are individuals with a responsibility to speak accurately about their feelings, ideas, affects and vulnerabilities. The playing children will come to trust the 'truth' of these responses. The repertoire of response to the child at play from the attendant adult is dependent on the faithfulness of the adult's feelings at any given time,

rather than adult platitudes. The adults need to be clear about their own feelings and not just operating on autopilot.

It is, for example, legitimate to express feelings of anger or dismay over an act. Both the child and the playworker can continue in the knowledge that they are not 'liked' or even 'hated' from moment to moment. (Winnicott's term of the 'good enough' mother is useful to help understand this point for play practice.) We would wish to make these concepts explicit through new forms of play training.

There can be no immersion in the symbolic depths of play if the team members are not themselves prepared, by education, training and disciplinary schooling, to enter into an exploration of their own counter-responsive attitudes and feelings about play content. It is this trust between the staff that is a major contributory factor to successful playwork.

Before and after play

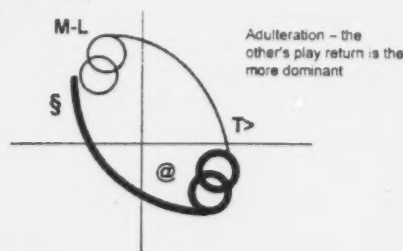
The description of play that we begin to outline in this paper is, by definition, structured in a more contemplative or meditative form. This is deliberate. The position of the workers in the play of children should be out of the most careful consideration of their influence, involvement, and intervention. For these reasons, we see the pre- and post-play session briefing and de-briefing as being a crucial element of play practice.

We propose that this existing preparatory and post-session range should be extended to consider certain themes, emotional acting-out, moods, created rituals, games or other constructed play forms, both physical and imaginative, with which the children have been absorbed. The amplification and associative richness of the playworker's responses, the potential for return, can be greatly enhanced by use of these sessions. In debriefing playworkers can explore their responses and learn for themselves the appropriate response to a situation.

Understanding

The various forms that we advance within this paper should not be seen as being firm protocols or procedures for involvement. We would prefer that they act simply as a framework, to understand the play of the child, through contact with that play. This necessitates an acceptance of play as multiform and as having depth and significance. Is the sense of play that we set out not to do with the developmental complexity of identity and self and all that that entails?

Figure 8



tives are presented solely by the workers. A further adulteration is evident as 'infantile toxicity'. Here the playworker becomes drawn into the child's play frame and becomes over-involved in the play. A rever-

This element of our practice, could have significant parallels with the description that the psychiatrist, Stanislav Grof, offers, when he says, "Whatever the nature and power of the technique used to activate the unconscious, the basic ... strategy is the same: both the therapist and the client should trust the wisdom of the client's organism more than their own intellectual judgement."

In the above statement, if child and playworker replace the words client and therapist we arrive at a meaningful description of playwork. Part of the great task facing our discipline is to arrive at the point where the adult worker can address the essential exchanges of play 'without restrictions'. Playwork, at any level, must come to terms with this form of endeavour as fundamental to our practice. Playgrounds, playworkers and children all interact to create containers of meaning for the playing child, moment-to-moment, day-to-day.

Some methods of involvement

We offer the following as a preliminary analysis of involvement in the play of the child or children. Playwork interventions can be understood in the following hierarchy:

* play maintenance: Children at play are absorbed in the acts or fantasies of play, the play is self-contained.

* simple involvement: Following the issued play cues of the child, the adult acts as a resource for the play.

* medial intervention: Following the issued play cues of the child, the playworker becomes involved in the essential structures of the play. The underlying play strategy is one where the structure, that is the frame of play, is partially created by the worker and the children together.

* complex intervention: In complex intervention, there is a direct and extended overlap between the playing child and the playworker. The strategy within this form of play is the same as in medial play, but the clear judgement of the worker in this context is that the frame and the content of the play may involve complex material or expression and be of an extended nature. The crucial judgement that pertains is that the playworker is there to co-operate with the symbolic and other material that the children are issuing and expressing

* the integrity of intervention: The playworker may be involved in any number of disputed or conflicting frames, narratives, themes and games, and so on. The children

themselves may be at a number of stages in the process, with the frame itself being contested by differing factions.

There may be calls for rulings, settlements, or re-establishment of a theme that has been eroded, changed or forgotten. The worker may be dealing with individuals and groups of children who are different levels in their discrete play frames. There will be pressure on the worker's time and involvement. The lively actions of some children may be offset by the need for quiet rapport with others. There may be an active collusion by the group to 'test' or distract the worker. In addition, child A will be different to child B, and there will be different processes for each child; some taking seconds, others weeks. The workers' integrity will be tested in managing these multiple frames.

Conclusion

The various methodologies we develop in this paper are intended to maintain the integrity of playworkers in their many onerous tasks. They are at work in a continuum of judgement and intervention beyond the scope of many other disciplines in terms of its potential for good or for harm. The playworker is present in the creation of the self, in work that is of the deepest psychological promise; and perhaps the soul of the child.

C. G. Jung, said, "the greatest sin is to be unconscious." Might we not say the same about the practice of playwork? Is there any other discipline, where vital questions about the medium within which the work is conducted, are so little asked, or so partially answered? Are we operating without due care and attention being paid to the more hidden aspects of our task? Are playworkers actively involving themselves in the dynamic processes of the child's play without a real understanding of its inherent worth, or of the effects of their interventions? Playworkers, in the play paradigm we have outlined, are required to work with myriad forms of play, from the grossest to the most subtle.

We would argue that we need created playgrounds as the original and infinitely more rewarding natural grounds for play are being eradicated, contaminated or developed for adult purposes. The governance of this space, both physical and psychic, means, if we are to fully honor children in their play, that those involved in playwork must have deep insights into their own histories and habits. We feel that the task of playwork requires us to operate in a contin-

uum of judgement and intervention in what is a precious and internal ludic ecology.

The profound irony that holds might be that the play adventure is no longer simply in the physical risk but also and perhaps more crucially, in psychic risk. It is perfectly acceptable to suggest that the child on the playground is an actor in an imaginative theatre of his/her own construction. If the child is in a cycle of play where the playworker sees some of the patterning we have described being enacted, where there may be the first signs of obsessive retentive play, it may be that a sympathetic ritual or rite can be enacted that will allow this passage to be safely negotiated.

The 'readings' that we are obliged to make of such playful enactments can be enhanced by our understanding of those themes and symbols, common across the developmental bands, that we encounter in our growing and evolving, human consciousness. It is this understanding that we need to share with our play work colleagues and communicate to the wider community if we are to fully realize our potential first as children and as human beings.

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Facilitating Play on Housing Estates

Rob Wheway

Introduction

Children playing in the outdoor environment have been a traditional part of our streetscape, usually remembered with warmth and excitement. However, considerable anecdotal evidence suggests that children "do not play out as much as they used to." Research has demonstrated that children's ranges have been dramatically reduced by the increasing dominance of the motor car. Considerable efforts have been made to keep children safe by restricting their movements. These restrictions, together with the view of some that children playing outside are a nuisance, have meant that housing estates (neighborhood housing areas) have been built with little consideration for how children will use their environment.

This study looked at twelve housing estates built between the 1890's and 1990's in order to ascertain both children's demonstrated and desire preferences for places to play. During the summer of 1996, over 3,500 observations were made of children at play on twelve council, private and housing association estates (built 1890-1990). Following the observations, 236 children and 82 parents were interviewed using structured questionnaires. Information was also gathered from estate managers, local planners and youth workers about their perceptions of where children played on the estates and any problems or particular benefits associated with this.

Study Purpose & Aims

The purpose of this study was to gather information which would assist planners and developers to ensure that children's play is facilitated on housing estates. In addition, the researchers considered feasible and practicable ways that would enhance the estates by enabling children's play to enjoy its place within the community. Study aims were:

- * to observe children at play on a variety of estates, measuring the range of their activities and the relative popularity of different locations within each estate;
- * to interview children and parents to ascertain their preferences for places;
- * to play and discover their assessments of

how good or bad their estate was for play; *and, to provide a set of guidelines for planners, providers and managers of housing estates that might translate into policy and practice which they could implement.

Findings

1. Children at play

Through observing children at play, the study found that a significant part of children's play activity concerns moving between different preferred locations and visiting, or diverting from a route/activity, to engage with friends and acquaintances. A vital part of play is choosing which location or friend to visit and making the journey there. Exercising these choices, and the consequent travel time, take up more time than any other individual activity. The majority of play outdoors is active (75 per cent) involving walking, running, ball games, use of wheeled vehicles and play equipment. The highest levels of imaginative play occurred on estates with a variety of front street surfaces, front gardens and access to raw materials from nearby informal open space. Other research by the authors suggests that periodically, a quiet street game (e.g. marbles, pegs) will become fashionable.

2. Differences between boys and girls

The relative proportion of boys to girls (67 per cent to 33 per cent) seen playing outdoors was closer than has been found in previous research. This could be because this study was confined to investigating children's play relatively close to home. Alternatively, it may be that girls are becoming more liberated in their use of the outdoor environment, as evidenced in the rise of girl's involvement in football and rugby.

3. Preferred places to play

There was a marked contrast between what children described as their regular and favorite locations for play in interviews and their observed behavior. Children said their regular and favorite locations were:

Open space	
(park, grassy area, field)	56%
Street/road	23%
Gardens (mostly back)	23%
Play area	21%
Friend's home	19%
Trees	17%
Outside house	16%
Shops	14%
(% total is greater than 100 because some children gave more than one answer)	
However, the researchers observed them playing mostly in the following areas:	
Roads/pavements	46%
Public open space/grassed areas	18%
Gardens (mainly front)	14%
Play areas	12%

Children still used the road/pavements of the street in front of their own homes as the main place to play. Alternatively, they might play by the home of a friend or relative. Movements away tended to be 'round the block.'

4. Estate design influences

Estates, which stimulated the highest level of outdoor play, were those with the greatest variety of front street surfaces and the slowest traffic. Estates which stimulated the widest range of play activity and satisfaction amongst both children and parents were ones with footpath networks, cul-de-sac layout, formal and informal public open spaces and play areas. Children over 10 and teenagers interviewed felt they were not well catered for and wanted more footpath networks, sports pitches and courts and pools for fishing.

5. Play space and playgrounds

Children placed a high value on playgrounds, parks, public open space, trees and grassed amenity areas. This was confirmed by both the frequency and the enthusiasm with which they were mentioned in the interviews. Research which has concentrated on the length of stay at designated play places has tended to cast doubts on the appropriateness of such provision. This would appear to be a misinterpretation of the findings, colored by the belief that what children need is a safe place to play rather than a variety of opportunities to play between which children can make choices. When children

observed for the study had a range of opportunities, they freely chose to visit them for short periods rather than stay at one for prolonged periods.

6. Perceived dangers

Children and parents perceived dangers in moving away from their homes and immediate surroundings. The dangers mainly concerned traffic and bullying and some interviewees also mentioned 'stranger danger.' There was some evidence that these fears reduced in areas where traffic speeds were reduced and consequently children moved more freely round their estate.

Conclusions

Much thinking on children's play, by both professionals and parents, has concentrated on the desire for 'a safe place to play.' Children have been perceived as being in danger or of being a nuisance by being on the streets. The provision of play areas and playgrounds has therefore, been seen as the appropriate response to these perceived problems.

Considerable thought has been given to ensuring that playgrounds for children are both safe for the children and provide interesting play experiences. There has also been considerable research and debate about provision in terms of numbers of playgrounds, either related to population size or distance from home. This research demonstrated that the main activity children playing outdoors were involved in was purposeful movement;; that is, they were walking, cycling or occasionally roller-skating purposefully in a definite direction. Thirty-seven per cent of the observation work showed children engaged in this type of activity, with a further four per cent appearing to do this for the purpose of a particular errand.

This finding is crucial to an understanding of how children use their environment and why designing housing estates to facilitate pedestrian and cycle movement for children is so important. Interviews with the children revealed very definite ideas on preferred play places. What is clear is that they travel from one to another, trying them out and meeting different friends. The traveling to and from constitutes a significant amount of time spent outdoors.

This is not to suggest that children no longer have favorite play places. The children's answers to the questionnaires clearly indicate that they have very definite ideas of

what are good places in which to play. However, even when somewhere is popular with the children, accessible and safe, they still show no desire to stay there all the time.

The researchers conclude that there is a need to change our way of thinking. The aim should be to provide a safe and interesting environment for play, not just safe places in which children can play.

Recommended guidelines for the design of estates based on this study can be obtained by requesting the full report.

Further information

The full report, *Child's play: Facilitating play on housing estates* by Alison Millward and Rob Wheway, is published by the Chartered Institute of Housing in association with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (ISBN 1 900396 26 2, price =A39.95). It is available from the Chartered Institute of Housing, Octavia House, Westwood Way, Coventry CV4 8JP, Tel: 01203694433.

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Part 2: Play and Theory

Introduction

Theories, and the research shaping and confirming them, are especially important as they apply to play. Typically, because play is mostly viewed as a frivolous activity in which to be engaged only after work has been completed, many may tend to ignore play. Yet there is a growing body of research literature that continues to support the fact that play is a vital and important component of human development. Many key people whose theories have influenced the field of early childhood education, such as Piaget and Vygotsky among others, placed quite a bit of emphasis on the idea that children do learn through a variety of different kinds of play. Similarly, as brain research continues to expand our knowledge of that wonderful, mysterious part of our anatomy, it is becoming more and more apparent that play is essential to all areas of growth. For those of us concerned about the academic push in the education of young children, it is such good news that serious research validates what we have been "preaching" for years. The best prescription for learning is a healthy dose of play!

Bodrova and Leong talk about the Vygotskian approach to learning. Research has shown that children perform at the highest level of their zone of proximal development in play, because "the play context provides the most appropriate support for the children's skills." *Kesner* addresses the question of conflict management in relation to the role of parent-child attachment. His interesting research showed that home environments have a great deal of influence on how children behave and resolve conflicts in play situations. *Skrupskelis* looks back into early childhood education history to uncover that very early, the "fathers" of early childhood education, Comenius and Froebel, stressed that play was the magical medium for learning in young children. In recent years much brain research has yielded exciting new information that validates the idea that play contributes significantly to all areas of development. *Jambor* brings us up to date with what research is saying about the brain and encourages us to look at our play practices with children and computers. Is the computer another Bogeyman? And finally, *Flemmen* adds an international perspective by describing two truly different playgrounds in Norway that give children an "out of the ordinary" play experience.

Play and its Role in Developing and Learning: The Vygotskian Approach

Elena Bodrova and Deborah J. Leong

This paper will examine dramatic play and how it is defined from the Vygotskian perspective. The major assumptions of the Vygotskian theory will be discussed as well as their implications for the education and their relationship to play. A special emphasis will be placed on the impact of dramatic play on the development of cognitive processes and self-regulation in young children.

Major Theoretical Concepts of the Vygotskian Approach

One of the key principles of the Vygotskian theory is the idea that learning can lead development (Vygotsky, 1978). We will discuss the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) to give a concrete model for how learning and development relate to each other and the concept of Scaffolding to explain how teachers support learning within the ZPD (Bodrova & Leong, 1996). The concept of Leading Activity will help the reader to understand why play is the most beneficial context for learning and development for young children.

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

For Vygotskians, learning is most effective when it takes place within the child's individual ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). The ZPD is defined by the behaviors that are on the edge of emergence. At the highest level of the ZPD are those things that the child can do with maximum assistance and at the lowest level are those things that the child can do independently. At any given time there are things outside of the children's ZPD—something that the children cannot learn no matter how much assistance you give them. It is within the ZPD that the teacher should concentrate, providing support to those behaviors on the edge of emergence will lead to learning that the child will be able to incorporate into his/her own repertoire of skills. For example, a young child may be able to put together a simple puzzle on his/her own that has square edges and clear pictures. With help from an adult, the child can put together a much more difficult puzzle. Tomorrow, what the child could only do with support, will become something that she can do all by herself.

Scaffolding

The concept of Scaffolding was introduced by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) to describe the optimal type of interaction that should occur within the ZPD. The analogy is with the building of a structure. When you build a building, you build a scaffold with the size and shape of the building in mind. In the initial stages the contractor provides more scaffolding than later, when the walls are established and the foundation is secure. If the scaffolding is removed too early, the building will suffer. If the scaffolding is not removed, the contractor cannot build another building.

In teaching, then, we would provide more support at the beginning stages of skill/concept formation. If we remove the supports too early, the child may have incomplete or incorrect understandings. If we leave the supports too long, the child will not be encouraged to move on to new learning. Scaffolding is the term given for the temporary support provided to the learner. It implies that the teacher must not only plan the best support given the child's current level of independent performance, but also must plan to remove the scaffolding to hand over the responsibility for performance to the child.

Leading Activity-The Most Appropriate Developmental Context

The concept of Leading Activity was developed by Vygotsky's students Leont'ev (1978) and Elkonin (1977) to describe the type of interaction between the children and their social environment that is most beneficial for child development. Vygotskians considered play to be the leading activity for preschool- and kindergarten-aged children. This means that in play, children perform at the highest level of their ZPD because the play context provides the most appropriate support for the children's skills. Children can remember better, attend better, and regulate their own behavior better in play than in any other context. Play provides the motivational as well as the cognitive context most conducive to development. Play promotes both the intellectual and social capacities of young children. In order to understand what the role of play is in fostering development, we must first look at the

Vygotskian definition of play. The idea of what play is for Vygotsky is different from other Western views. Play has very specific characteristics, it is not just what the child does when he is "not working." The original Vygotskian ideas about play were expanded by Leont'ev, Elkonin, and Venger (Elkonin, 1978; Leont'ev, 1978).

Definition of Play

Play has an imaginary situation, explicit roles, and, at the same time, it has implicit rules (Vygotsky, 1977). By an imaginary situation, Vygotskians mean that the pretend scenario is made clear and specific between the participants. The children tell each other using language and props what the play is going to be about. "Let's pretend we are in a circus." "We're fixing cars." They also make explicit the roles that are going to be part of the imaginary situation. "We're princesses and we have to make our clothes for the ball like Cinderella." "You're the alpha-dog and we're your puppies." "He'll drive the bus and we'll pay the tickets." While the imaginary situation and roles are obvious and can be seen and heard, there are implicit or hidden rules which cannot be seen unless they are violated. Unlike the imaginary situation and roles, the rules are only made clear when one of the participants acts "out of character." The rule has to do with the limitations on how the child might act and the behaviors the child must abide by if he is going to participate in the play. For example, the "alpha dog" cannot talk on the phone, because "dogs" don't do that. If the pretend scenario is a circus, then only "circus-like" behaviors are allowed. A child cannot start playing "library" if the group has agreed to play "circus." Of course, the children can decide to change the rules and incorporate the new ideas, themes, scenarios, and roles into the play. However, these changes are negotiated between the children and for those few minutes, the hidden rules become explicit. If a child acts against the rules, other children will say "wait a minute, you can't do that." The child is out of the play until the group adjusts to the new ideas.

How Play influences Development

Play provides scaffolding that allows children to function at the upper level of their ZPD. According to Vygotsky, play presents

a unique opportunity for young children to practice new skills as they emerge, much earlier than these skills become transferred to any other activity. A number of studies performed by Vygotsky's students found experimental evidence of the fact that preschool- and kindergarten-aged children can attend longer, remember more, and solve more difficult problems when engaged in dramatic play (Elkonin, 1978). After having practiced new cognitive skills in play, children become ready to utilize these skills in other contexts.

Play also creates the zone of proximal development of the child. In play, the child is always behaving beyond his age, above his usual everyday behavior; in play, he is, as it were, a head above himself. Play contains in a concentrated form, as in the focus of a magnifying glass, all developmental tendencies; it is as if the child tries to jump above his usual level (Vygotsky, 1978, p.74).

Play facilitates the separation of thought from actions and objects. Vygotsky's view on play as an early precursor of symbolic thought is not unique. Similar views can be found in other traditions, for example, in Piaget's approach. Most researchers agree that in play, a child has to "detach" a function from one object and "attach" it to another one-which constitutes an act of symbolization. What Vygotsky added to this statement is the direct link he saw between child's ability to use symbolization in play and this child's success in using higher order symbols-such as letters and numbers-later in school. This idea was supported by the research on kindergarten-aged children done by Vygotsky's colleague, Daniel Elkonin (1978). Elkonin's data show that practicing symbolization in dramatic play has more positive effect on early literacy and math skills than forcing young children into academic activities at the expense of play. Play facilitates the development of self-regulation.

In a statement that may sound controversial, Vygotsky declared play "the most restrictive" activity young children are engaged in (Berk, 1994, Vygotsky, 1977). When playing, children need to comply with the rules to keep the play going. It often means that children suppress their immediate desires and abandon their plans to carry out the joint plan of the group. For example, the child who did not get to be a doctor has to agree to a less attractive role of a patient-otherwise

none of the children will be able to play "hospital." At the same time, the child playing doctor has to stay in the role and speak politely even when the "patient" does not want to get a shot and is screaming and kicking. Since play is the most attractive activity for young children, they have to agree to all these sacrifices in order to stay "in." Thus, play becomes the context where children first see the need for self-regulation and also the context that provides greatest rewards for being self-regulated.

Developmental Path of Play

The Vygotskian definition of play limits the scope of the use of the term "play" in describing activities of young children (Vygotsky, 1977). For example, exploration of objects and manipulation with them typical for infants and toddlers do not qualify as play. What happens in this age may be just preparation for play-when a child learns about objects and actions that would be later used in a pretend fashion. Another thing that a child learns that prepares the way for play is language that will help him to separate real and pretend uses of these objects in play.

The first signs of play in Vygotskian sense, appear when children start using objects to stand for something else. First, children may simply imitate adult's actions in new contexts gradually expanding the repertoire of actions from realistic to symbolic. At this stage, children are more focused on the objects and their functions than on the people using these objects. It happens, for example, when a one-year old tries to feed herself with a spoon and then starts "feeding" her stuffed animals. This stage seems to be universal and look very similar across different cultures and social contexts.

The next stages in the development of play, however, are more dependent on the social context children are being raised in. At the second stage, called "role in action" (Elkonin, 1978), a child starts to act out certain roles by imitating the most typical actions that are associated with these roles. Vygotskians believe that the very concept of "role" acted out in play is a cultural concept that varies greatly from non-industrial societies to the modern ones. Even within the same culture, children may reach the second stage at different ages and stay at this stage for long periods of time, depending on the nature of their interaction with their caregivers. Typically, one can observe this kind

of play in children ages 3 to 4, when the children spend most of their play repeating the same sequence of actions as long as they stay in the same role. For example, children who are playing house will wash the dishes over and over again or set the table over and over again.

In their play, younger preschoolers depend heavily on props and may even refuse to play if these props are perceived as not being sufficiently realistic. Verbal labeling alone can not yet remind children of the role they are playing or the new function of the object they are using if the objects do not look similar enough to the "real thing." Play is not usually planned in advance, and consequently children start noticing the implicit rules only if someone breaks them. Insufficient mastery of language makes it difficult for players to communicate their ideas of how to play to each other. As language and knowledge about people and objects around them grows, children become able to separate "role" and "action" thus moving to the next level of play. In some cases, though, even older children would not be able to make a transition to the more advanced level of play without substantial instructional support.

The most advanced stage of play development is the one that has all three elements of play present: imaginary situation, explicit roles, and implicit rules (Elkonin, 1978). At this stage, children can take on a role without necessarily engaging in overt actions. Simple props, several typical gestures, or even a verbal label can be sufficient to indicate a role. Objects needed for play no longer are the exact replicas of the real things. Objects may even change their function several times following an evolving play scenario. Unlike the previous stage, this stage requires more planning of play before actual acting out. Rules may be discussed in the beginning and also re-stated every time a new child joins the play. The shifting focus from actual acting to the rules prepares the emergence of the next stage-games.

In describing games, Vygotsky noticed that they differ from dramatic play in the relationship between roles and rules. In games, it is the role and imaginary situation that become implicit, while rules come to the surface and become explicit (Vygotsky, 1977). For several years play and games can co-exist and then play eventually loses its prominent role in children's lives.

Although there are no exact ages associated with each stage in play development, Vygotskians believe that the peak in play typically occurs at age 5-6. This is the time when it is critical for children to reach the level at which all three play elements are present at their fullest. It is not accidental that this age is also the age where children are ready to start formal schooling. Without an experience of self-regulating in play, young students have a hard time following directions and concentrating in a classroom. Experience in inventing imaginary situations and in using multiple objects-substitutes also prepares children for the use of more abstract symbols in reading and math.

As mentioned above, not all children reach the highest level of play by the time they turn five. In fact, many kindergarten-aged children still play at the level that can be expected from toddlers. Their "immature" play heavily depends on the use of props, involves a limited repertoire of roles, simple repeated actions, and rudimentary use of language. "Power Rangers" would be a good example of this immature play where children declare themselves "a pink ranger" or "a blue ranger" after which they shout the words "pow-pow-pow" and chase each other. It perfectly fits the description of "role-in-action" stage that normally is over by age 4. Obviously, if children are allowed to remain playing like young toddlers, they will not develop the symbolic thinking and mature cognitive skills necessary for later development.

Teachers' Role in Facilitating Play

The fact that we cannot expect all children to take advantage of the play opportunities at their fullest, draws our attention to the role teachers should play in facilitating play. Teachers should walk a fine line between no intervention and direct intervention "playing as a child." The "no intervention" approach is not acceptable because we can't rely on all children learning how to play spontaneously and because our culture currently provides few opportunities for play development outside of the preschool classroom. On the other hand, too much intervention, no matter how well intentioned, actually ruins the play. When teachers play like children, play is changed into an adult directed activity that has its own value but can never replace play.

What teachers can do is to support the key elements of play. Teachers can support the development of imaginary situations by pro-

viding multipurpose props that can be used to stand for many objects. Teachers can help children expand their repertoire of themes for play with rich field trips, literature, and videos. Imaginary situations can also be strengthened by helping children learn the language that will enable them to create the play scenario (Bodrova & Leong, 1998).

Teachers can support the development of roles and rules by helping children to plan play in advance. Advanced planning helps children clearly communicate to each other by labeling the roles and describing what the person in the role can and cannot do (Bodrova & Leong, 1998). It is important when introducing new themes or taking field trips to enrich existing themes, to focus children's attention on the relationships between people rather than on the objects used (Bodrova & Leong, in press). For example when a nurse comes to visit and explains life at the hospital, she should focus on the many people who work there and what they do. If she focuses on the interesting instruments, like the stethoscope or syringe, the children will just want to play with the objects and will have few new roles to add to their play repertoires.

Concluding Remarks

While most early childhood programs acknowledge the importance of play in the lives of young children, there are several trends on the horizon that may change the central role of play in the early childhood classroom. The first is the advent of literacy standards, which increases the pressure for "academic" activities to teach the alphabet, phonemes and writing in early childhood programs. The second is the popularity of such programs as the Project Approach and the Reggio Emilia approach. While these programs do not advocate against play, and often mention the importance of play, these programs place a great deal of emphasis on activities that are not play. These activities have wonderful outcomes and products, but they do not have the central elements of play-thus they cannot act as a substitute for play. As long as these activities exist alongside play in the classroom, then children will have the benefit of the kind of environment which will encourage the optimum levels of development. However, if teachers cut down on the amount of time for play and the teacher support to have play at the most mature level, then we are sacrificing the activity that will

produce the greatest developmental gains.

It is our belief that the Vygotskian approach provides much support for the central importance of play in the development of cognition and

the underlying skills necessary for later development. It stands as a theoretical rationale for the importance of play as well as giving practical ideas about how to increase the levels of mature play in the early childhood classroom.

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Conflict Management in Children's Play: The Role of Child-Parent Attachments

John E. Kesner

Introduction

By far the majority of social exchanges that occur between children occur during play. However, this is also the most likely time for conflicts to arise. Recent research suggests that the majority of conflicts children face are either unresolved or resolved in destructive ways (Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, Ward, & Acikgoz, 1994). How children learn to manage and resolve conflicts in childhood can have far-reaching implications for their play and for all future social interactions. Yet, so much of what children learn about the world and how to interact socially occurs in the home environment. Thus, by the time children reach the childcare center or school, many expectations of other children and knowledge of how to behave in play situations are firmly planted.

The earliest relationships with parents have a tremendous influence on the development of expectations regarding how others will act in social interactions. The child-parent relationship serves as a model for all future relationships (Bretherton, 1987). Anyone who works with children must understand the history of children's relationships with significant others in order to help children adjust to an expanding social world. This article describes a research study conducted to investigate the impact of children's early relationships with their parents on their ability to negotiate conflicts that occur during play.

Literature Review

Bowlby's attachment theory (1969, 1973, 1980) has long been utilized as a framework for understanding how intimate relationships in early childhood influence a child's social competence in and out of the home. Research using attachment theory has shown that parent-child attachment relationships are very influential on children's social skills. That is, children who are securely attached to their parents are more socially competent with peers and adults. For example, in two studies, Waters, Wippman and Sroufe (1979) found that infants who were securely attached to parents smiled, vocalized, and shared toys more at 18 months than those infants that were insecurely attached. Additionally, these differences

were still found at three and one-half years. Pastor (1981) found that securely attached children (20-23 months) were more sociable toward peers and adults than insecurely attached children who were more negative toward peers and adults, and more stressed overall.

More recent research on the effects of secure/insecure attachment have focused on gender differences. Fagot and Kavanagh (1990) found that girls who were insecurely attached to parents were rated by teachers as having more difficulties with peers and in general more difficult to deal with. Cohn (1990) found that six-year-olds boys who were insecurely attached to parents were more aggressive, less well liked by peers, and rated by teachers as less socially competent than securely attached children. Additionally, Turner (1991) found that insecurely attached boys were more aggressive, disruptive, assertive, and controlling than secure children. Girls who were insecurely attached to parents were rated as having more dependent behavior and more positive expressive behavior. These insecure girls were less assertive than secure children. Lewis, Feiring, McGuffog, and Jaskir (1984) found that insecure boys had more internalizing problems than boys securely attached. Girls who were insecurely attached had more externalizing problems than those girls securely attached. However, the research discussed above does not address the issue of conflict management and attachment specifically.

Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between the security of children's attachment relationship to their parents and how they negotiate and manage conflicts in play situations. We believed that children who were securely attached would exhibit more constructive conflict management strategies in hypothetical play situations.

Methods Sample

The sample for this study consisted of 66 preschool-aged children residing in a large urban area in the southeastern United States. Forty-four percent of the sample was male and 56% were female, ranging in age from

44 to 70 months, with an average age of 57 months. The sample was predominantly African-American (71 %), with Hispanic (17%), Caucasian (9%), and the remainder other races (3%), with a wide range of SES groups represented in a fairly normal distribution. Forty-five percent of the sample came from single parent homes and the average family size of the sample was four.

Procedure

Children for this study were recruited from several child care facilities in the area. Parents were contacted and asked for their participation in this study. The children participated in two story completion tasks. The first was the Attachment Story Completion Task (ASCT) developed by Bretherton, Ridgeway, and Cassidy (1990). This task measured the relationship between children and their parents. The quality of the relationship was assessed by analyzing how children responded to a variety of hypothetical situations involving their parents. Children that gave mainly "secure" responses, as defined by specific criteria, were scored as securely attached to parents. Those that give mainly insecure responses were scored as insecurely attached to parents. It should be emphasized that children had to give predominantly insecure responses before they were classified as insecurely attached. Approximately one week later a Conflict Story Completion Task (CSCT) was administered to the child. This story task is similar in design to the attachment stories except that these stories involved conflicts in play situations that children might encounter in the preschool setting. Once again children's responses to these stories were analyzed and a score was given as to how constructively children solved conflicts in the stories. All stories involved play figures appropriately matched for the gender and ethnicity of the children participating in the story completion tasks.

Results

Fifty-eight percent of the sample was classified as securely attached to their parents and 42% was classified as insecurely attached. This classification was not affected by the child's ethnic group, socioeconomic status (SES), or whether they came

from a single parent home.

The children's choice of conflict management strategy was related to their attachment relationship with their parents. That is, those children that had constructive conflict management strategies to the conflicts in the stories were more likely to also have a secure relationship with their parents. The securely attached children were more likely to suggest compromise, negotiation and innovative new solutions to the play conflicts that occurred in the stories. Insecurely attached children were more likely to suggest aggressive strategies or strategies that relied too heavily on imposing their will on the partner in the conflict in order to get their way.

The children's choice of conflict strategy was related to SES, but in an unexpected direction. Lower SES children were more likely to propose constructive solutions to the conflicts. In other words, lower SES children proposed more negotiating and compromising strategies for the conflicts than did higher SES children. Taking into consideration all of the factors that might influence conflict management strategies (i.e., gender, single parent family status, SES and attachment to parents), the attachment relationship with the parents was the single biggest factor in determining how the children will respond to the conflicts in the stories.

Discussion

These findings suggest that the home environment may influence how children behave in play situations at school. As predicted, attachment security was a unique predictor of the child's choice of conflict strategy and resolution to hypothetical play conflict stories. Low SES, and being from a single parent family, are generally believed to put children at risk for higher levels of conflict (Kupersmidt, Griesler, DeRosier, Patterson, & Davis, 1995), and while there was a relationship between conflict management and SES, when the attachment relationship with parents was taken into consideration, it was the only variable that was truly related to children's choice of conflict management in these conflict situations.

The relationship between SES and conflict management might be explained several ways. It is possible that lower SES children live in more conflicted home environments and have had to deal with more conflicts. It is also likely that the lower SES

children spend more hours in the child care center. Therefore, increased hours in the center may expose these children to more conflicts and more intervention as well as teachers who have been trained to work with children in a constructive manner. Further, this study illustrates that regardless of SES and single parent status, children can form secure relationships to their parent(s), as neither of these variables were related to attachment security.

Implications

The implications for this study are significant for teachers, and any other person who works with children. Current environmental factors may tell only part of the story in explaining how children behave during play. Children bring a developmental history with them as they enter into each new interaction, and with this history come expectations of how others will behave. Only by understanding this history and expectations can those who work with children effectively facilitate play.

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Taking a Second Look: Whatever Happened to "Just Playing?"

Audrey Skrupskelis

At the beginning of each semester, instructors of college courses are sent new textbooks by publishers for their books to adoption consideration. This past year I have looked at five or six Early Childhood Education textbooks and have not found anything new that would warrant a textbook change. In particular, I have paid close attention to the theoretical sections at the beginning of these textbooks and have been disappointed in what little credit is given to the giants of Early Childhood Education, how few citations from primary sources are used, and how the original language used in the primary sources has been misinterpreted, in some cases discrediting those who have influenced the field. On the same note, it was quite depressing to conduct an Internet research search using "play / language / cognition" as descriptors and find about 200 pages of articles and research reports on "school readiness," and nothing that mentioned play as a key ingredient for school readiness which can lead to academic success. Perhaps it is time for those of us involved in IPA to conduct serious research on the role of play in cognitive development by revisiting our roots.

In Comenius' introduction to his 1657 text, *The Great Didactic*, he writes, "Let the main object of this, our *Didactic*, be as follows: To seek and to find a method of instruction, by which teachers may teach less, but learners learn more; by which schools may be the scene of less noise, aversion and useless labor, but of more leisure, enjoyment, and solid progress... (in Keatinge, 1967, p. 4)." Although in the present day, we may disagree with the religious nature of Comenius' "magnus opus," much of this methodology nevertheless centered on the nature of the child and observations of the child engaged in everyday activities. His seventh principle states, "Nature compels nothing to advance that is not driven forward by its own mature strength (p. 137)." He gives examples from nature: chickens don't fly before their feathers are developed or trees do not bear fruit before leaves and blossoms appear. Development is orderly and sequential and anything that is forced before its time only creates problems and is not natural. Similarly, when a young

child is forced to learn things for which he/she does not yet have the capacity, the spirit will rebel. Comenius stresses throughout his book the critical importance of not teaching anything to the young, which their mental or physical developmental level cannot handle. "Nothing should be learned by heart that has not yet been thoroughly grasped by the understanding (p.138)." And, how does a young child learn to "understand"? It is through the most natural medium—play. Play is the one activity, whether unstructured or structured, through which a young child begins to grasp the "mystery" of learning.

In today's private or public school settings, there is a curious and very serious lack of child observation by teachers. It is not unusual for a four year old child to bring home an "authentic assessment" portfolio of a month's work that is geared for children at least two years older; work that has no individuality, spontaneity, creativity, or educational value, because it is work for which the capacity to understand has not yet developed. The work is all the same. Yet what attention is paid to the child's frustration? What attempt is made to "naturalize" the process of learning to understand? I questioned a four-year-old who brought home one of these "authentic" portfolios if all the children in her preschool class could do this work. The tragedy of her answer was that she named by name the ones who could not do the work! Rather than engaging young children in tasks that build on the child's natural curiosity, creativity, and exuberant joy, we are teaching the child to identify the "dummies." Comenius wrote, "We wish all men to be trained in all the virtues, especially in modesty, sociability, and politeness, and it is therefore undesirable to create class distinctions at such an early age, or to give some children the opportunity of considering their own lot with satisfaction and that of others with scorn (Keatinge, 1967, p. 266)." I wonder what Comenius would say, if he could observe a day in the life of a child in school at the end of the twentieth century?

For Froebel, like for Comenius, the primary purpose of education was religious and spiritual in nature and within the context of the historical age in which they lived,

appropriate. Apart from the spiritual nature of the writing in *The Education of Man*, it behooves early childhood educators to revisit the text in which great attention is paid to the nature of childhood, childhood development, and the role of play in children. For Froebel (1887) the inner connection between the child's mind and the objects, which are being studied, forms the central theme in education. That inner connection is formed in play: Play is the highest phase of child-development—of human development at this period: for it is self-active representation of the inner—representation of the inner necessity and impulse. Play is the purest, most spiritual activity of man at this stage, and, at the same time, typical of human life as a whole—of the inner hidden natural life in man and all things. It gives, therefore, joy, freedom, contentment, inner and outer rest, peace with the world. It holds the sources of all that is good...is not the most beautiful expression of child-life at this time a playing child?—a child wholly absorbed in his play?—a child that has fallen asleep while so absorbed? As already indicated, play at this time is not trivial, it is highly serious and of deep significance...The plays of childhood are the germinal leaves of all later life...If a child is injured at this period...he will only with greatest difficulty escape in his further development... (p. 55-56)

In this passage, the injury to which he is referring is physical injury, and of course, given the advancement of medicine, we know that this is not necessarily so. However, if one looks at the word "injured" metaphorically, as "lack or deprivation of play," then the harm which is done certainly does hinder development in all its forms. Evidence of the social and emotional harm which has been done by play deprivation is manifested in the proliferation of programs that purport to teach people "how to play"—parents how to play with their children, corporate employees how to play before meetings in which decisions have to be made, and play therapy for those with emotional problems, among others. With young children in educational settings, depriving them of play and replacing play with highly structured academic exercises can lead to loss of

self-esteem, poor physical conditioning, disillusionment with the joy of learning, and lack of social negotiating skills.

Perhaps Froebel's greatest contribution to early childhood education is not so much his "gifts and occupations" methodology, but the fact that he combined the opposites "work" and "play" (opposites as we see them today) into one creative activity which not only delights the child but leads to an "academic" result. Although the importance of play in the early years of childhood had been discussed by Plato, Quintilian, and Luther among many other notable people, Froebel articulated the nature and function of play and its critical role in healthy development of children. Spontaneous play, the outcome of the great energy and vitality which children possess, is important because in many cases it is the natural application of what has been learned in school. Therefore, what is taught in school ideally should reflect itself in spontaneous play.

In *The Psychology of Childhood* (Norsworthy & Whitley, 1920) the authors discuss not only play as a natural activity, but play as "attitude" which separates it from work or drudgery. "When the activity seems play to the individual, the process itself seems worth while; he [the child] is concerned only with the activity, that in itself satisfies him," whereas, "the work attitude is brought about because the activity in question, for some reason, is not adapted to the individual's capacity at the moment it is indulged in (p. 213)." For the authors, ideally, in learning situations, it is critical to consider the developmental capacities of the child in order that the child may be so drawn into the process, that the result is a fusion of play and work. It is this "play spirit" that must predominate in classrooms if the child is to receive the greatest education benefits from instruction. "It must be remembered that the play spirit appears whenever activities are suited to the individual's capacity and stage of development, and in themselves satisfy a need (p.215)."

In today's classrooms the lack of this wonderful play spirit is evident in instruction. The emphasis seems to be on consciously distinguishing between "work" and "play," rather than in fusing them together to make instruction meaningful and appropriate. If one is doing schoolwork, then one cannot be playing. If one is playing, then one is not working, and, in education, work is the more valued object. More of an issue,

however, is the seemingly complete disregard for the developmental needs of individual children. In some states there are programs which aim to "prepare" very young children for kindergarten. At this early age the distinction is already made between play, which is natural, and work, which is unnatural, throwing young children into "educational" situations which are beyond their developmental levels and needs. In fact, because of this early emphasis on distinguishing between play and work, more often than not, the opposite happens. Children's self-esteem suffers because they cannot "do the work"; their developmental needs are not met, their natural spontaneity is aborted, and their frustration level rises. The educational value of the free play of children increases... In their play children learn to observe quickly, to judge, to weigh values, to pick out essentials, to give close attention; they learn the value of cooperation, to recognize the rights of others as well as to insist on their own being recognized; they learn the meaning of freedom through law; they learn the value and function of work and the joy of accomplishment. A child who does not play not only misses much of the joy of childhood, but can never be a fully developed adult. He will lack in many of the qualities most worth while because many of the avenues of growth were unused and neglected during the most plastic period of life (Norsworthy & Whitley, 1920, p.219). No modern-day psychology textbook has made a stronger case for the critical need of the play spirit in educational settings.

In many current Early Childhood textbooks Maria Montessori is downplayed and her immense contributions to the field of Early Childhood Education greatly minimized. She typically gets a paragraph of recognition, yet, probably more than anyone else, she revitalized the field and brought it into the 20th century. While many may not agree with her methodology, which seems very inflexible, nevertheless, her observations and study of young children have given us insights into children's development and needs. She especially stressed that the child understands his/her own developmental needs better than anyone else, and the adult provides the setting for meeting these needs. In talking about the program in the Children's House, she says, "In fact we do not have a program for instructing a child, but rather it is the child who, living in the

midst of, and developing himself with the help of, physical, and intellectual labors, achieves different levels of culture which, generally speaking corresponds to his advance in age (Montessori, 1967, p.322)." The important thing to note is that Montessori stresses that early childhood education is not a preparation for elementary school. Rather, it draws on the absorbent mind of the child and involves him/her in opportunities to use the mind through the use of hands. She states, "After the age of three he is able to acquire a great number of concepts through his own exploring his surroundings. Nevertheless. He has not as yet reached that state of maturity which will enable him to learn from listening to adults (Montessori, 1967, p. 325)."

If one can say anything about many of our "modern" Early Childhood Education programs, it is that they focus on the teacher, the teacher talking, the teacher showing, the teacher demonstrating, the teacher dominating every aspect of instruction, and the children listening, listening, listening, and not having any time to put the 'listening' to active exploration. It is not unusual to see three-year-olds sitting in group time for as long as 30 - 45 minutes, listening to teacher talk. What a waste of precious active play spirit time that should be used for involvement in active, playful explorations. Montessori herself stresses the environment in which a young child spends time is very important to nurturing the absorbent mind: "The room is dedicated to him, and he is free to move about it, talk and apply himself to intelligent and formative kinds of work (Montessori, 1995, p.169)." She observed that children who were given this freedom of movement and talk grew in independence and proclaimed that they wanted to do everything by themselves, without any adult help (Montessori, 1995).

One point that Montessori was adamant about was that teachers who work with three- to six-year-old children must be well-educated in the area of child development, stating: "We must know how children develop and give up all preconceived ideas. It needs great tact and delicacy to follow the mind of a child from three to six, and grownups seldom have enough. Luckily, the child learns more from this surroundings than he does from us, but we need psychological insight to help him as much as we can (Montessori, 1995, p.170)." I find it interesting that in child-care places the staff

who work with the children are called "teachers." To be a teacher implies that one has had extensive education in the field of education and is qualified to work with young children. Unfortunately, in the United States, this is the exception rather than the rule, and most childcare staff has minimal education in child development. Lack of knowledge leads to the preponderance of practices that are totally inappropriate and in most cases deny children the one medium through which they learn best—play in an environment that feeds the imagination, challenges, and respects the development of children. Montessori observed that young children seem to know their own developmental levels and often choose activities and the kinds of play that build on their need perceptions. "The child might say, 'I am not perfect, am not omnipotent, but this much I can do and I know it. I also know that I can make mistakes and correct myself, thus finding my way' (Montessori, 1995, p.249)." To have such trust in children's intuition requires that those who work with children have a thorough understanding of child development.

According to Brian Sutton-Smith (1986), throughout history play has been distinguished as "good" play and "bad" play. Good play is assumed to socialize children and encourage cognitive growth, whereas bad play, on the other hand, is that kind of play that is dangerous or considered a nuisance by adults. The assumption that good play can occur only under the supervision and direction of adults seems to have permeated modern day thinking, taking away from children's freedom to engage in spontaneous play which they themselves gear to their personal developmental needs. As Sutton-Smith says, "Although we use play in various ways in the classroom for our own purposes, we need to remember that the children have purposes of their own, and need to deal with such purposes largely by themselves (even if under distant supervision), making use of this vital and universal kind of communication (p. 13)."

As we approach the twenty-first century, we need to reassess where we've been, where we are, and where we are going. By remembering those historical figures who have given us visions of what Early Childhood Education should be, developmental and playful, it is necessary for us to continue strong advocacy programs to return to children what is their right: the

right to play. It has been forty years since the United Nations signed the Declaration of Children's Rights in 1959. Yet it seems that Article 31 of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, which focuses on play, is one the most neglected. All IPA members need to become vocal and active advocates for putting play back into academic programs. Children who are allowed to engage in play will be "ready" for school. Remember what Froebel said: Only the child who is given the utmost freedom to act, move, and unfold, without constraint or deforming force, can achieve his maximum potential. Play is the fundamental means whereby the child, through his own impulses and inner resources, grows. It is the educator's responsibility to provide the widest opportunity and freedom for such play. The measure of success will be the child's pleasure and satisfaction in each accomplishment and desire for further development (Downs, 1978).

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The Brain and the Bogeyman of Computer Technology

Tom Jambor

The child may have a right to play, but the bogeyman is lurking to inhibit play opportunities. That bogeyman is both fact and imaginary in the minds of meaningful adults who want the best for their children. Bogeymen of the '90's, who have taken play opportunities from our children, have been seen in the forms of neighborhood violence, changing family structure, school academic paranoia, elimination of recess, increased traffic, squeezed residential play space, unsafe and unchallenging playgrounds, and increased sedentary lifestyle brought on by TV, video, and, of late, computers.

It is computer technology that is my latest bogeyman of concern. A new bogeyman that is snatching play from our children's repertoire of activities. It is no big news that all too many of our children now have new digital playmates. And, we, in general, as an adult society are essentially thrilled by it. We can, in part, blame our neuroscientists for this mad rush in the USA to connect preschoolers to the "electronic brain." Although educators have noted it for some time, it took neuroscience credibility to make parents sit up and take notice that,

1) the first 3 years of life is the prime time for billions of neural connections to be made in a child's brain,

2) the brain of a 3 year old is two and one-half times as active as that of an adult brain, and,

3) the experiences a child receives between birth and three directly affects the way neural pathways develop in the child's brain (Healy, 1998).

This scientific verification has also sparked the serious interest of our entrepreneurial electronics industry. Nothing has been more successful of late than developing a computer market for parents and caretakers of young children. The marketing attempt is to persuade adults to put children at the computer at the earliest possible age to, as they put it, enhance children's quality of learning and better prepare them for a changing time and an unpredictable "future." Of the top ten CD-ROM titles, four are marketed for children beginning at three years of age, with programs being advertised for those as young as eighteen months (Healy, 1998).

And, a great marketing it is, too! A recent study noted that two-to-five-year-olds now spend three hours a week online (AOL, 1999). Most parents and teachers don't have a clue that to date there is no evidence that computer technology before age seven makes a difference in achievement. What IS clear, though, is that the many forms of "play," provide the foundation of sensory-motor activities that maximizes the brain's potential. Sprenger (1999) notes from numerous studies on animals and humans that play is essential to maximize learning. She clearly points out that social interaction, care, challenge, and play are important for growing dendrites. These factors influence how we learn, whether it be in the home, the classroom, the neighborhood, or the work place. This information has been around for a long time. It is no great secret that daily play experience is the brain food that feeds those dendrites in our young children. Jane Healy (1998) notes that:

"A major criticism of media technology - no matter how interactive- is that it takes away from a child's unprogrammed play time. While adults may consider this time as just a lot of messing around or unproductive time, it is actually the young brain's primary means of intellectual development and creative expression. Adults who have retained their ability to play (with ideas, inventions, materials) are the most productive and innovative people (p.223)."

For instance, children playing with blocks may not know the shapes of those blocks, but develop an understanding of its properties and how they work together. The celebrated architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, remembered throughout his life the blocks that got him started on his career. At 88 he stated: "the maple wood blocks are in my fingers to this day (Healy,1998, p.220)." Famous painters have also related preschool age hands-on, manipulation experiences in unstructured play settings as foundations for their masterpieces!

In our fast paced world we must not overlook the importance of developing kinesthetic intelligence. Children must be able to mess around and experiment three-dimensionally and use all their senses in their play. We must not try to avoid messes by design-

ing and implementing digital finger painting programs, or on-line puzzles and origami art. Tidiness and messlessness is counter-productive to early brain stimulation and consequential development. Children are concrete learners and must experiment, mess-around, to create meaning from their cognitive content. It is through play in a real-life context that children derive important cognitive principles and rules. A teacher of 4-year-olds said, "It takes me until after Christmas to get them to pretend that a block is a loaf of bread; if they lose their imagination and their spontaneity, what's left of childhood (Healey, 1998, p.224)?" When hours are devoted to the computer, hours are deleted from potential opportunity to engage in the informal play that is necessary to help children gain social skills and learning to handle their emotions (from rage to joy) in appropriate ways. "Play seems to make the difference in quality of life, between merely surviving and really thriving (Angier, 1992, pp. C1,C8)."

Parents at home and teachers in preschools are hoping that an earlier start with technology will enhance learning quality and better prepare these youngsters for the future. The question is, "Will it?" Is this the best way to help prepare our kids for an unpredictable, unforeseeable, and certainly changing future? The research is beginning to come in that says it is not. To date it is clear that if computers make a difference, it has yet to show up in achievement, and certainly doesn't warrant its \$20 billion price tag (Healy, 1998).

Hey parents, teachers, kids.....is the techi-bogeyman gonna getcha?

More great quotes from Jane Healy's (1998) book:

"We bought our three-year-old this great computer, but all he wanted to play with was the box it came in." (father, Florida)

"After you've developed your own brain, then you can have an artificial one to play with." (mother of six-year-old, Vancouver, Canada)

"The hi-tech world has created many passive participants in life." (Phyllis Weikart, High Scope Foundation)

"These plug-in kids don't know how to

play!" (Kindergarten teacher, Iowa)

"A good toy is 90% child and 10% toy."
(Joan Alman, President, Waldorf Early Childhood Association)

"Most children's software is 90% computer and 10% child." (response from first-grade teacher)

"I cannot think of any case in which computers could be developmentally appropriate for children in nursery school...Since we agree that 3's and 4's need to have plenty of time to explore mud, sand, water, and blocks, etc., where do you fit in a computer?"

"Let us not let our adult excitement with what computers can do in the adult workplace deter us from offering to children the squishiness of making mud pies, the scent of peppermint extract when making cookies, and the feel of balancing a block at the top of a tower.....the adult world of the plastic workplace comes all too soon." (preschool teacher)

"Technology! I feel as if we're being swept down this enormous river - we don't know where we're going, or why, but we're caught in the current. I think we should stop and take a look before it's too late."
(Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Long Island, New York)

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Sprenger, M. (1999). *Learning & memory: The brain in action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development.

Brain research and application books worth considering:

- Diamond, M. and Hopson, J. (1998). *Magic trees of the mind: How to nurture your child's intelligence, creativity, and healthy emotions from birth through adolescence*. New York, N.Y.: Dutton.
Hart, L. (1998). *Human brain & human learning (updated)*. Kent, Washington: Books for Educations, Inc.
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"Real Play" in Karmoy, Norway

Ashbjørn Flemmen

After years of designing playgrounds within nature at school and community sites around Norway, an opportunity was given to design a model play environment that embraced all the elements of what I know as real play—few restrictions and an almost never ending allowance for play interaction at all possible levels and extended variety of choices. The location is the island of Karmoy off the southwestern coast of Norway. Nature here is an incredible mix of trees, bushes, boulders, ledges and levels. Nature's pathways and textures beckoned children to come and play. Two years of intense planning, design and community participation brought together a blend of nature and man-made design. This weave encompassed a six-block park area around the school Skudenshavn Barneskole. It now stands as a play paradise for not only children, but also for all the adults who enter this unique environment of real play.

The context of Real Play

An area of real play must be created in a way that:

- * children do a lot of things together,
- * children try to investigate the unknown, both in a social and physical environment,
- * children frequently will look for the same activities and in this way can learn more about themselves, about other children and about the environment,
- * children are given the possibility to alter different aspects of the environment, and that they must be given the possibilities for their own imagination and creativity, and
- * children are given rich possibilities to experience the joy of moving the limits of their potential capacity.

We must show consideration that children have different basic qualifications. Individual differences are a great inspiration for real play, but puts special requirements to the play area. If the play area shall function for everyone, there is a requirement that:

"All children must be able to choose the activity they wish to do with regards to who they are together with, previous experiences they have, and in respect to this what level of development they are at." This requires:

- * that the play area is created on the knowledge we have about the sensory possibilities that humans have through their genetic

hereditary,

- * that the play area is created in a way that demands movement which, on a rising scale, challenges the coordination between children's senses and their movements,

- * that the play area stimulates the social development of the child, and

- * that the play area has so many activities and is so rich that the child does not have to wait, or fight, to be able to take part in play activities.

Why Skudenshavn Primary School was chosen

- * The play area of the school was unique because of the considerable amount of open play space around the school.

- * A lot of hide-and-seek activities were already taking place throughout the area.



- * Rather than segment the land for other school use, we wished to keep these areas intact for play.

- * The tree configurations were ideal for "jungle" activities. The vast wooded areas were an important play resource and we wished to enhance play within the trees and to insure that the trees were properly cared for. Branches were cut to improve the condition of some trees and to facilitate play movement and stimulate climbing.

- * The area allowed for adjustments to accommodate a multitude of sensory and gross motor activities.

- * We did not make unnecessary interference in the play area; the activities were to happen as much as possible in a natural manner with regards to the environment.

Real Play design objectives

- * The activity should allow involvement of more than one person at the same time to maximize socialization.

- * The children should be able to group themselves in minigroups; the area ought to consist of many small elements; i.e., soft-tennis, table-tennis, tennis rackets (many of each category).

- * Similar quality of play activities should be made available in all of the play area.

- * There should be play areas to accommodate children's need for basic motoric movements.

- * There should be an effort made to care for the existing natural environment and to provide facilities that will develop the positive elements which already exist in the play area.

Existing spaces and new play places



To establish a play community for young and old alike, and to accommodate the vast array of developmental needs and play involvement interests, the following play content areas were added to enhance the natural environment, to artificially replicate the natural environment, and to extend play opportunities.

- * More areas for climbing/jungle activities - created by attaching tires to vertical utility poles

- * Hide-and-seek areas

- * An area for gymnastic activities

- * Different ball activities - a large pitch was split into several smaller pitches to avoid two strong teams dominating play and to give more room for each child to compete at their own level.

* Different ball activities - table-tennis, softball, badminton, tennis, soft-tennis and basketball.

* Many basketball hoops with different diameters and heights.

* Room for sheltered areas with benches and tables.

* "Pavilion" - a music studio where there is space for musical activities; "instruments" are available that can be used to make colorful sounds.

* Sand basin - designed on several levels and with connections to water sources.

In conclusion

This is only a beginning. As children play and interact with the natural and constructed environment, adjustments and additions will be made in accordance with observations and feedback from all users. A good playground must be ever changing. A good playground must accommodate all users at all levels of need. A good playground brings the players back time and again. A good playground has "real play."



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Part Three: Play and Education

Introduction

Current education practices are obsessed with making the distinction between work and play. It seems that as soon as children begin walking and talking, the word "work" is introduced into their vocabularies seemingly to get them "ready for school." Classrooms are littered with drill sheets that presumably teach young children the skills necessary for survival in the adult world. Why is it that our society seems to stress the fact that work and play cannot go hand in hand? There is much talk in schools that children need to be taught creative problem solving skills. They do so naturally during periods of play. Likewise, critical thinking skills are emphasized as important. Yet children learn these during periods of play, too. In fact, if one analyzes the skills and content that are learned during play, then one finds that all content and skills, which are taught in the classroom, can be learned during play situations. There is no basis for the separation of work from play. It is much more effective and certainly more enjoyable and natural for children (and adults too!) to merge the two in order to create a truly inviting environment for learning.

Davey addresses the importance of play in the elementary curriculum and cites two examples of children who were able to deal with their social development problems through specially structured and individualized play activities. *Fox* points out that construction play, intentionally building or creating with objects, is the least studied type of play. She looks specifically at construction play in the art area giving teachers many fine examples of how to promote it. *Halliday* discusses developmentally appropriate curriculum and lists motor development activities that help to maximize learning in the early years that should continue in later learning. In her article, *Haynes-Dusel* describes a science playground in New York which includes many varied activities through which children learn about science concepts in an appropriate and fun way through hands on experiences. Some of these activities could be reproduced quite easily within schools and classrooms.

In *Keeler's* article, we are invited to add sounds to play environments to activate the sense of hearing. The soundscape sounds suggested by Keeler could be added easily to playgrounds—all it takes is a little planning and imagination. *Zucker* continues to explore the relation of play with art and music. Her ideas should make believers in the "Mozart Effect" happy and perhaps convince non-believers of the learning that can take place through playful music and art activities.

Play and Teacher Education

Linda DuBois Davey

Chances are that if this title caught your attention, it is because you expected it to be about the early childhood years. If, instead, you are an elementary educator, I would hazard a guess that that your field is physical education. I do not portend to read minds here. Rather, I am expressing an observation that those educators who speak, write, or show concern about play do not tend to be elementary school teachers. As an educator for almost 35 years, with experience in both early childhood and elementary education, it seems to me that play is not a topic which rouses much interest among elementary teachers in terms of its importance to their jobs....

Play is ubiquitous to human nature. As a species, humans display an ability (or need) to continue to play into adulthood and this, anthropologists surmise, accounts for the creativity which has allowed humankind to make such incredible advances. When Ben Franklin hoisted his kite into the stormy sky or when Robert Fulton sat entranced by the dancing of the lid atop a pot of boiling water, they were responding to a compelling inner drive to play. Yet most elementary educators do not tap into the great resources this drive can offer in children's school learning.

I will not defend the need to play in this paper or even explore the complex textures of play's influence on various aspects of development. That has been done by many, many others. Instead I will propose that if play is to gain the respect for the richness it has to offer to elementary school children and their teachers, then preservice teacher education must offer such a model. I will begin by exploring some reasons why play is not very visible in elementary education and then discuss how early childhood education and elementary education differ in their approach to play, even though they both direct themselves to three or four of the very same grades (K-3). Following this, I will give two examples of how elementary teacher educators can utilize knowledge of play in their work with student teachers and I will conclude with some remarks about the possibilities for including an understanding of play's important role in development within elementary teacher education.

Undervaluing Play in Elementary Education

Play is defined by many standards but to the general public, the association which comes most quickly to mind is that which evokes images of recreation, of idleness, purposelessness or messing around - a concept which does not sit well with our view of either schooling or learning. As adults, we tend to view play with suspicion. While observing the obvious pleasure children derive from play, as a society we tend to see elementary school as a place children go to learn about the adult world, and we can't help but see play as a waste of precious time. We are capable of recognizing to some degree the place of play in physical education and the importance of PE to the health of our children - but our tolerance frequently ends there. We seem to know that children need play, but have difficulty as adults sharing our own lives with it, let alone school hours. Teachers reflect this public opinion in their work with children. The credo most of us subconsciously adhere to is this: School is work. Work is serious (and therefore quiet) and at least for children, others must direct work. Teachers are well aware that their own work is probably being judged by these standards.

Some years ago, for example, I was in charge of the lab school on a college campus. One day an administrator of the college walked through the kindergarten while students were working with the children. It was just the type of day that delighted me as a teacher educator; a day where theory and practice came together in ways that spoke eloquently of the student teachers' learning and their comfort in applying this knowledge and skill. The students were totally in charge of planning and everywhere I looked children were animated and engaged. They were working in cooperative groups at centers with much hands-on activity, problem solving, and discussion going on. They were going about their work with purposefulness and independence, obviously enjoying the entire process.

When the gentleman reached his destination across campus, he came across a colleague of mine who knew the great pleasure I was deriving from the student teachers' progress with this group of children. When

the administrator mentioned that he had just come through the lab school, my colleague asked if the program impressed him. The answer was obvious when he replied, "Oh, they must have been on recess as I came through."

It is no wonder then that when teachers do allow play in the classroom at all, it is usually shrouded in ways that keep it teacher directed, cognitively defensible, and bounded by the authority and limits set by adults. Activities or materials are planned and introduced by the teacher with specific academic goals for the children. But even young children are not easily fooled when we call such activities play and are capable of defining play by the context in which it occurs.

When kindergarten children were asked to classify school activities as either work or play, (King, 1987), their answers revealed two criteria for play. Play is only play if it is voluntary and not assigned by the teacher and if the activity has not been standardized and closely supervised by the teacher. In many schools, there is little in the child's day, either in or out of the classroom, which would meet this criteria. In fact, it is questionable whether the highly scheduled and supervised existence of today's child allows for much play by this definition anywhere. Yet play allows children to develop skills greatly needed in the adult world, the lack of which can impact development in other areas.

The feelings of success or failure generated during the give and take of social interactions with peers are crucial to the child's developing sense of self. There is evidence that this social play provides critical experience that adults cannot provide and which is difficult to acquire later in life (Howes, 1987). Playing with peers offers greater challenges to children because they must take on more responsibility for the flow of the play and because they cannot rely on the adult to clear up snags in the encounters (Eisenberg et al., 1985). The early school years are, in fact, critical to the development of social ability and it is in the day to day play activities of children that these skills become finely tuned. When "play time" with others is limited to adult directed activities, the development of these skills can be limited or overlooked. Social immaturity, in

these situations, does not get much opportunity to work itself out through experience with others but instead is left to be rectified on its own through time or is thought to be responsive to reprimand. Perhaps if we recognize the unique opportunities which play offers the child, we can begin to defend its place in the elementary school curriculum.

Teacher Education and Play

In early childhood teacher education, the need for play is acknowledged and promoted as appropriate for the developing child not only as a recreational outlet but also as a significant forum for the child's learning. Even though the press for academic achievement increasingly drives both program and curricula in many young children's programs, continuous efforts are made in the field to try and help parents and teachers understand the importance of play. However much our society seems determined to leave less and less of childhood to children, (Elkind, 1982, 1990; Postman, 1982), an accent on play in some form is still familiar to most early childhood teacher education programs.

The early childhood years traditionally encompass birth through age eight. While these years include the first three or four grades of the typical elementary school, the implications of such a definition have not apparently been fully understood by those who administer public elementary schools, many of whom seem to define early childhood settings as kindergarten and below (Klugman, 1990). In early childhood teacher education programs, considerations of play generally tend either to be directly addressed or woven throughout the curriculum, depending on where teachers are taught (Bowman, 1990) and typically include references to children in the early elementary grades. But what happens in elementary teacher education? Where do these teachers learn about the developmental uniqueness of the young child and, as well, the importance of play? Perhaps as important, where are the opportunities within the preservice field work of student teachers for support of the skills needed to utilize and defend play in children's school lives?

Within supervised field experiences, there is room for a more integrated approach to the development of the child to be addressed, if we care to look beyond the typical observation/post-observation supervisory format revolving around a typical lesson plan. Such an approach to field experience is generally set up to review isolated

planned lessons and while a good supervisor can facilitate some wonderful growing experiences for the student teacher within this format, it nonetheless reviews only one form of learning within the child's school day. In doing so, I fear that the message to novice teachers is that this way of approaching their work is the most professional and effective.

In my own work with student teachers, I have attempted to enlarge the sphere in which we can dialogue about children's growth and learning. I will offer two examples.

A case in point: Franky

Franky was a five-year-old who was enrolled in a kindergarten program where I supervised several student teachers. He inadvertently became the focus of many hours of our discussions because of frustrations that the student teachers (and the teachers) felt in their pursuit of a plan of action.

Every day Franky would arrive at school and within a few minutes would be involved in some sort of unpleasant interaction. He would proceed to spend the next few hours doing what was requested of him but at the same time alienating virtually all the other children and eventually, the teachers. Reminders to "play nicely" went nowhere. "Remember the rules, Franky" had a similar effect. Behavior modification programs, (which the student teachers were determined to put into effect), had no long-term value. Students began repeating teachers' observations that he was "a mean child" and just "wouldn't listen" to their suggestions. The fairness of spending all this time on one child became an issue with the student teachers.

For the most part, Franky would keep to himself—unless someone invaded what he considered his space or he wanted something another child was using. He played with no other child on a regular basis and would avoid all group activities unless it was to destroy the play of others. It seemed that he preferred either to annoy or avoid the other children and they seemed quite content to reciprocate.

All this came to a head when his mother came in to the observation room to see how Franky was getting along. When she observed the situation, she filled up with tears. Apparently, this same behavior was noted at other schools Franky had attended. All his teachers had said that Franky was disruptive to the class and needed to

improve his social skills but nobody seemed to know what to do about him. The mother told me that the other teachers did try various punishments and even rewards, that she told him every day to "be good" in school, but nothing seemed to be having a lasting effect. We decided that a closer look at this situation was warranted.

When I spoke to Franky's teachers they reported that his academic and physical development seemed fine. They made consistently favorable assessments of Franky's understanding of concepts in math, science, social studies, phonics and literacy and they believed he was doing well in all of these areas. When confronted with a developmentally appropriate challenge he would rise to the occasion. He was making steady progress, they thought, in many areas. His biggest problems arose during free play time, either inside or on the playground, and lunch. Transitions, too, often provided a setting for trouble. The milling of people and waiting in line usually erupted into some form of inappropriate behavior on Franky's part.

Unfortunately, while the student teachers recognized that he displayed anger frequently and that his interactions with the other children were invariably marked by hostility, they persisted in their intuitive belief that he was not trying to get along and they resented the time and effort they needed to spend constantly reminding him of the classroom expectations for his behavior. Variations of "I've told him over and over that pushing is not allowed in this room, and he just refuses to behave." were commonplace. The fact that Franky was clearly demonstrating serious deficiencies in his social skills, especially in his child-to-child interactions, was something they all either ignored or overlooked. He could not play with other children without conflict. His unhappiness was also not taken into account.

If their exasperation with Franky's behavior was unique to my experience as a teacher educator, I would not be as concerned as I am. Instead it is something I run across every day of my professional life, whether on the East or West Coast, in public or private elementary schools, or as part of my work with undergraduate or graduate teacher education students.

What seems apparent to me is that teachers somehow remain poised to help children learn cognitive and physical skills, willingly seeking different tactics when the child

seems unable to grasp a concept, yet assume that telling children the rules should ensure immediate "learning" of the social behavior involved. Deviance from these rules is seen as moral failure on the child's part rather than a lack of knowledge, experience or ability.

But it is during play itself that the knowledge and experience about social behavior is developed, refined and extended. Consequently, we watched Franky play. We took turns shadowing his movements and actions for several days. We noted the expressions on his face, his movements toward other children and the other children's reaction to him. We took careful note of anticipated "trouble" times, and with this information on hand, we met to plan our strategies. In this case the staff, the students and myself began a program to help Franky express his feelings and to observe the consequences of his actions as an educative experience instead of one that was purely punitive. We also sought ways to expose him to the alternatives available rather than resorting to "bench time," (where typically the child is told to use the time to think about his inappropriate behavior, as if some magic light of insight will suddenly illuminate his thoughts).

After shadowing Franky's play, we were able to help the other children express their feelings about his aggressive behavior directly to him. We explained that he wanted to play with them but often didn't know how and that his anger sometimes really covered up his loneliness. When he had been reprimanded in the past, Franky often avoided eye contact, pulled away from the teacher, glared defiantly through his punishment, and performed the perfunctory "I'm sorry" with contempt. Once he saw that the focus of these reprimands changed, (as did the tenor and tone), he became interested, if only at first because of the novelty. Whatever his motivation, we got his attention. He watched the children who now said to him with a teacher's help, "You hurt me Franky. I don't like to play with you when you hurt me." or "Ask me if you want to play. I don't like it when you grab my toys." But perhaps the most insightful occurrence was the day a little girl, who had avoided Franky with obvious diligence, was overheard saying to him on the playground, "I never knew you wanted to play with me, Franky. I'd be your friend if you asked me."

Franky did not change overnight. It took consistency on our parts and the gift of time

for him to grow and develop. We all looked for opportunities to encourage peer play at school and sometimes took part in outdoor play, as well as observed it. We sat with the children at lunch, and were always alert for ways we could model and discuss social interactions. We watched him play, listened to his conversations and used the knowledge we gleaned to plan in ways which might match his development. Students were able to use a Vygotskian approach by such means and reflect on whether such authentic assessment was effective in approaching Franky's Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978).

By the end of the year, we all knew that Franky's first grade experience would be a decidedly more pleasant experience for all involved and the students began to realize that the concept of fairness involved varying levels of need. As a group, we realized that the totality of our efforts expended on Franky's behalf would probably not be possible for a classroom teacher to offer any single child, but at the same time, I felt assured that not a single one of these student teachers would ever again assume that the healthy development of social skills was NOT a part of a teacher's responsibility to children.

A case in point: Sonia

While the previous case describes how play was used to help understand and encourage a child's social development, play can also be the lens through which we determine what children know academically. Children's play gives significant evidence of their understanding of many concepts (Cohen et al, 1997; Fromberg, 1998; Genishi, 1992; Rogoff, 1990). We can observe specific behaviors and verbalizations from the children that demonstrate their comprehension of language, humor, and friendship, all of which are developed in play. Moreover, if we take the time to look clearly, we can collect information on other aspects of development as well.

In younger children, estimates of heights and size, ordering and seriation, conservation, sequencing, and the ability to follow multi-step routines, among other abilities, can be observed during play. Rote counting can be distinguished from one-to-one correspondence. In older children, play can be used to augment the teacher's understanding of students' comprehension, problem solving, planning abilities and general knowledge. The ability to use knowledge, to transfer it to other contexts in a logical fash-

ion, can often be observed more authentically through play than through tests and worksheets. Moreover, an understanding of the children's often overwhelming drive to explore new materials, to play with them before being asked to work with them, can be a great help to a teacher's planning, efficiency and efficacy.

Sonia was a student teacher in a third grade classroom. She was committed to hands-on experiences and cooperative learning for children and was trying out her philosophy by approaching her math lessons with manipulatives, something she did not receive much support for by the cooperating teacher. Her teacher was proud of her excellent control of the class. Children came into the class in the morning and knew to begin their routines without talking. The quiet was calming at first for Sonia, but before long, it began to feel oppressive.

Her first lesson involved money. She wanted the children to be able to add items from a supermarket flyer and buy as much as they could with a given amount of money. She came in prepared with real flyers, paper money, and job sheets for each member of the group. She introduced the lesson, divided the children into groups of four and gave them the materials. Immediately, they began to play with the money. Talking and laughter erupted at many tables as children fantasized about what they would buy. They splayed wads of the fake bills to each other and as Sonia went from table to table trying to get them back on task, she realized she was fighting a losing battle.

Later the cooperating teacher told her that children always behaved like that when they are given materials which encourage play and that they learned best when the teacher kept the reins tight, orderly and used ditto sheets instead of such real life, tempting materials. Sonia was deeply disappointed by the disintegration of her lesson, and in our next group discussion, the class of student teachers reflected on why children may have behaved as they did. While several student teachers insightfully commented that the children might have needed a longer introduction to the materials, they failed to note how such play might have provoked deeper meaning for the lesson itself. They further tended to see the time factor as a problem, reiterating how the classroom teachers were anxious to cover the entire curriculum. Hands-on play time was not

moving the curriculum forward on schedule and there was obvious aversion to such wasting of time in their classrooms.

In this case, I asked them to go back into their classrooms and try introducing an activity which included novel materials. They were to use the introductory lesson only as an opportunity for children's exploration. Each student was asked to reflect on possible ways to justify the time educationally by observing the children as they played and seeing if they could interpret learning in this way. On the following day they then were asked to do a lesson using the same hands-on materials and compare the results to Sonia's.

Given the support for this type of play, the students came back with some outstanding reflections. All of them were impressed by what they learned about individual children through the observation process. Most had never really taken the time to watch group dynamics, listen to conversations or pick up clues about learning in context. All were uncomfortable to be in charge of a class and yet not be teaching that class yet they felt comfortable in retrospect that they could justify the time. One student reported that the children were easier to quiet during the free play and also easier to focus during the lesson. Another student charted what she could definitively say she learned about a child as opposed to what she uncovered that she would like to observe further. One displayed a group of anecdotal notes on each of the children and commented that she knew this type of record keeping was important but had never had time to actually do them and another asked the children themselves what they learned about the materials they were given to work with. Sonia, using different materials, compared the children's focus during the second lesson with her initial experience, concluding that in terms of actual learning that had taken place, the play time was useful and efficient. She also commented that the children, after being given their opportunity to explore the materials playfully, were actually better behaved and motivated than when they were given worksheets, although the buzz of voices was a problem to the cooperating teacher.

Here, too, I felt that these students would go out to their jobs not just theoretically prepared but with the practical experience that would support a more open attitude toward play in the elementary school curriculum.

Conclusion

These are just two small instances of how

student teachers in a preservice elementary teacher education program can be exposed to an understanding of play in ways that do not require program restructuring. They are meant to convey one person's attempt to explore opportunities for elementary teachers to learn about the importance of play to children's development. If a realization of play as an integral facet of learning and growing is ever to seep into the fabric of our classrooms, such an outlook needs to be advocated in a way that will allow teachers to see play with an alternative lens and to discover that the early elementary years are intimately connected to principles of early childhood education. Teacher education programs are perhaps situated to accomplish this most effectively.

Teaching the whole child would seem to have a pressing importance to 21st century America, where children have less and less opportunity to interact autonomously with peers. Play dates, team sports, structured skill building lessons, and the lure of computers and TV have superseded opportunities, even among our youngest children, for the unstructured social interactions through which humans learn relate to each other in many complex ways. When children raced out of school at three o'clock and played with neighborhood friends till darkness sent them home, they experienced very different interactions than do those who go from school to day care or play dates or teams or their computers - and schools need to recognize that the children sitting in classrooms today may have some unique play needs.

In planning the materials and the kinds of play that we might want in classrooms, the potential for assessing development in all domains and therefore more efficiently targeting ways to present a program and curriculum which meets children's needs, should be carefully examined. In assessing student teachers, the extent to which they are aware of these possibilities should be taken into consideration.

Skim through the required course offerings of some elementary teacher education schools and check if you can find an allusion to play. You are likely to find courses on the field's history, philosophical foundations, contemporary issues, and a few that can loosely be grouped together as methods courses. In addition, you will probably note the inclusion of the obligatory child development course but probably nothing specifically on play. There are, of course, exceptions, but as I speak to teachers and students

in many parts of this country, and as I observe the work of elementary teachers in classrooms, it seems evident that elementary school teachers do not as a whole embrace, utilize or even consider play as a valid component of education. Yet children's play is so rich that it can offer to teachers many opportunities to increase their own efficacy in the classroom, if they were made aware of the possibilities. Why not introduce these connections as they prepare to become the teachers of tomorrow?

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Constructive Play in the Early Childhood Art Center

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Art in the Early Childhood Art Center

Rubin (1985) defines constructive play as children's intentional building or creating with objects or materials. Although constructive play is most often associated with the block center in early childhood programs, it is also the primary activity of young children in the art center. "Block play, woodworking, play with art media when there is an end-product, or using anything available to 'build with' are examples of constructive play" (Pugmire-Stoy, 1992, p. 14). This paper will examine the importance of constructive play in young children's growth and development, and its manifestations in play activities in the art centers of early childhood classrooms.

Although constructive play appears to be the most common activity during the free play of kindergarten and preschool children, it is also the form of play that has received the least attention from researchers (Christie & Johnsen, 1987). This lack of research attention may be due in part to difficulties in defining constructive play.

What is Constructive Play?

Piaget (1962) describes constructive play as involving both sensory-motor skill and symbolic representation. As such, involvement in constructive activities is a "move away from play in a strict sense, towards work, or at least towards spontaneous intelligent activity" (p. 109-110). Smilansky (1968) identified constructive play as a form of play, placing it on a developmental hierarchy between functional play and dramatic play. In this hierarchy, constructive play develops during the preoperational stage of development, along with dramatic play, but does not require the advanced intellectual skills used in dramatic play. Christie and Johnsen (1987) describe constructive play as the intersection between functional and dramatic play, explaining that it frequently serves as a precursor to dramatic play and that there are many crossovers between these three forms of play. Other authors have provided more simplistic definitions for constructive play, focusing on the essence of the activity rather than on sharp delineations between the various forms of play. Rogers and Sawyers (1988) suggest

that children engaged in constructive play use materials such as clay, blocks or paper to create something that will remain even after the play is finished. Pugmire-Stoy (1992) describes constructive play as play that "leads to an end product (p. 14)." Isenberg & Jalongo (1993) state that "in constructive play, children create something according to a preconceived plan (p. 41)." Although these descriptions of constructive play may not be definitive enough for research purposes, they do provide a basis for practical planning in early childhood classrooms.

Development of Constructive Play

Despite difficulties in defining constructive play, several researchers have studied the qualitative changes in young children's constructive play during the preoperational stage of development. During the first three years of life, functional play, involving children's repetition of simple muscle movements or utterances (Rogers & Sawyers, 1988), is the most common form of play. Around the ages of 2-3 years, children begin to replace random movements with purposeful movements and include language, imitation, and dramatics in their play. Functional or goal-less play gives way to purposeful play that results in a "creation" (Frost, 1992, p. 80). At this time, children engaged in constructive play presumably possess motor and sensory abilities that allow them to manipulate materials, along with a growing capacity to recognize and retrieve stored memories as they re-create elements of previous constructions (Pugmire-Stoy, 1992).

As children grow, constructive play becomes an increasingly important activity. By age 3, constructive play accounts for 40% of all play activities (Rubin, Fein, & Vandenberg, 1983), and many constructive play products from 3- and 4-year-olds show intriguing creativity (Pugmire-Stoy, 1992). At this age, however, the process of constructive play is key to children, rather than the outcome. These early constructive play activities focus primarily on the manipulation of materials and show little evidence that children are attempting symbolic representation (Christie & Johnsen, 1987). Kamii and DeVries (1993) point out that the early manipulation of materials serves a pur-

pose for young children beyond practicing motor skills. It is through such manipulation that children begin to construct knowledge about objects in their environment.

Between the ages of 4 and 6 years, constructive play continues to be a dominant activity for children, accounting for roughly 50% of all their play (Rubin, Fein, & Vandenberg, 1983). Around the age of 5 years, according to Pugmire-Stoy (1992), children engaged in constructive play "prefer to make simple constructions using few materials" (p. 74). A qualitative change, however, in constructive play occurs at this time. Rather than focusing on manipulating materials, children begin to create with the intention of representing something in the real world. Nicolopoulou (1991) states that when children make this claim, their constructions may be defined as symbolic. He believes that as children mature, they become more sensitive to contour and detail and build their understanding of the relationship between parts and a whole. This maturity leads to increasing realism in their constructions. Reifel & Greenfield (1982) add that maturity also leads to increased spatial complexity in children's symbolic constructions.

Johnsen, Christie, Peckover, and Tracy (1987) observed that very often five-year-old children play constructively for a time, and then use their constructions symbolically in dramatic play. These findings are consistent with Piaget's (1962) observation that younger children engaged in art activities draw merely to represent objects, but as children mature, they draw with the intention of including their drawings in "systems of wider intellectual significance" (p. 288).

Christie & Johnsen (1987) state that during these preschool years children begin to shift their emphasis from the process of constructive play to the end product. In one sense, this shift of emphasis actually causes constructive play to become less of a play activity and more work-like. However, because children construct their products with the intention of using them in pretend activities, Christie & Johnsen assert that constructive play still qualifies as a true form of play.

Benefits of Constructive Play

Research on the effects of constructive play on children's learning and development is limited and, in some ways, conflicting. Although Bruner (1983) reports an informal experiment in which young children who were given the opportunity for constructive play beforehand were clearly able to use materials for problem-solving better than children without play experience, findings from other studies have had questionable results. Again, defining constructive play has been difficult for researchers, and methodology has been problematic in some studies. In a review of the empirical research on constructive play, Christie and Johnsen (1987) hypothesized that constructive play is "quite benign in terms of its effects on social and cognitive variables" (p. 446). Further, Rogers & Sawyers (1988) describe the skills used in constructive play as ones that children already possess, implying that new skills are not acquired. Rubin's (1982) study of preschool and kindergarten children, however, found positive associations between parallel-constructive play and mental age, sociometric ratings, social problem-solving skills, and complexity of play constructions.

Much research, however, is available on the effects of children's participation in art activities, which are described as being one form of constructive play by Piaget (1962), Caplan & Caplan (1973), Lasky & Mukerji (1980), Rogers & Sawyers (1988), Pugmire-Stoy (1992), and Frost (1992). Fox & Berry (1998) provide a summary of research on the benefits of art production activities. In the domain of socio-emotional development, children develop autonomy and decision-making skills (Schirmacher, 1998; Seefeldt, 1993), build self-esteem (Klein, 1991; Sautter, 1994), and social skills such as sharing, taking turns, and negotiating for materials (Sautter, 1994). In the area of cognitive development, children build knowledge of properties of the objects in their environment (Kamii & DeVries, 1993), learn to self-evaluate (Klein, 1991; Feeney & Moravcik, 1987), and explore the use of symbols.

Observations of Constructive Play in the Art Center

As a site for constructive play, the art center in a classroom for young children can yield much information about what children learn through constructive play. Informal observations conducted in three kinder-

garten rooms over a period of several months found most 5-year-olds focused on symbolic representation in their artwork. In those instances of constructive play observed, three focal points for the children's activities were evident.

Problem-solving

Problem solving involved a child's efforts to create in reality an effect that he or she was able to visualize. Children's attempts to problem-solve generally began as independent efforts, and most often became small group efforts as the child asked peers working in the center for advice. Marisa, for example, attempted to create a tall, thin tower-like structure with clay. The top of the structure was too thin, however, and drooped over to touch the tabletop. Marisa added clay to thicken the top, but did not provide any support to the base. Finding it still too droopy, she folded her creation in halves and rolled it out a second time. When she moaned in frustration at a second drooping tower, Roger told her:

Roger: It's not gonna stand up.

Marisa: It just needs more clay up here...and in the middle.

Roger: No, it's not gonna work. Clay is too wilty to stand up like that by itself. You can only make it about that big (indicating with his hands) if you want it to stand up.

Although Marisa did not respond to Roger's advice, she soon began working on a series of shorter towers, modeled after the larger one she had originally tried to make.

Most problem solving involved two or more children and focused on modifying or revising a project that was underway. In those few problem-solving instances involving only a single child, the artist typically discarded initial efforts and began again with fresh materials.

Texture

Texture was the focus of much conversation at the easels. Children had discovered that painting on a vertical surface produces paint runs if the paint is not thick enough. On several occasions, children engaged in easel painting with the intention of determining how thick the paint was that morning and how it would look on the paper:

Caitlin: Oh...my orange is running. I don't want to use that one.

LaVisa: You can catch it with your paintbrush. Gotta go fast...

Caitlin: Yellow is thick, it's easy. Blue's easy.

LaVisa: Green's easy, too. I got green.

Caitlin: Don't use orange-it's runnin'.

Experimentation with color

Experimentation with color occurred not only with the paints at the easel, but also with Play-Doh and modeling clay, and with crayons. Children mixed colors in all of these media, even when their teacher had directed them not to, as with the Play-Doh. Newly mixed colors were always announced to others in the art center, children and adults, and the mixer always appeared to be pleased with the outcome, which was frequently a shade of brown.

Children at play in the art center also identified shapes and colors in their own art work and that of their peers, and frequently discussed the relative size of objects depicted in their work and of the materials used. Crayon-size was a concern for many children, with most looking for longer crayons because they were easier to handle, and a few opting for the smallest crayons available.

Supporting Children's Constructive Play in the Art Center

Teachers can provide support for young children's constructive play in the art center in three basic ways. First, the physical environment in the art center should be inviting and should be designed to maximize participation and minimize messiness. Locating the center on a tile floor makes for easier clean up and eliminates the need for plastic floor covers that may prove to be safety hazards. Space should also be provided for laying paintings flat while they dry. A stacked drying rack is ideal, but empty floor space will work if it is outside the regular traffic pattern. The center should also be located close to a window for natural lighting. A bulletin board and shelf will allow children to exhibit drawings, paintings, and sculptures if they so desire.

Second, since making decisions is a key cognitive activity in the art center, children should be offered choices about what materials to use and what to make. Although too many choices may overwhelm young children, offering two to three materials at one time is appropriate in the early childhood classroom. Watercolor paints, construction paper for collage, and markers for coloring may be available on a shelf for children's use on one day, with all other materials placed inside closed cabinets for use at another time. When children have explored these materials thoroughly, two to three new choices may be offered. Although rotating

materials is important, it is equally important for children to have repeated experiences with the same materials throughout the school year. This gives them the opportunity to master use of each material. Mastery is needed before children will really begin to use the materials for self-expression (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1975).

Within each of the choices offered, it is also important to limit the number of paint, clay, or crayon colors available at times. This will encourage children to experiment with mixing colors and varying tints and shades.

Finally, teachers support young children's constructive play in the art center through their responses to the children's creative activities. Adult responses to children's artwork influence the way that children come to view themselves as artists and should be carefully crafted to encourage creative expression. Teachers should recognize that not all artwork, by child or adult artists, must be pretty. Art is self-expression. The feelings that are expressed may be powerful, dramatic, moving, or emotional. Therefore, teacher comments such as, "Oh, that's beautiful!" or "How nice!" are not appropriate, even though they may be well meant.

The first thing teachers should do when children share their artwork is pause and look at it carefully. This pause lets children know that the teacher is considering the work seriously, and it also gives children time to begin the conversation and share whatever is important to them about their work. After considering the artwork, teachers can then focus their comments around the following artistic elements identified by Hardiman and Zernich (1981):

- * COLOR – "I see you've used blue here and here, just like the blue on your shirt."
- * LINE – "You've used thick dark lines over here, and thinner lines at the top."
- * MASS or VOLUME – "You've drawn large shapes at the bottom and smaller ones on this side."
- * SHAPE – "I see round shapes in the middle of your drawing."
- * TEXTURE – "You applied the paint very thickly in this shape. I can see ridges and waves."
- * PATTERN – "I see a pattern on your sculpture that reminds me of the stripes on your skirt."
- * SPACE – "You've made your shapes to fill the whole page and covered all of the space."

Using comments based on these elements provides encouragement to children, without conveying the idea that artwork must be pleasing or pretty to the teacher.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the importance of constructive play in young children's growth and development, with particular emphasis on constructive play in the art centers of early childhood classrooms. Though difficult to define, constructive play is a major activity for young children. A well-designed art center and a supportive classroom teacher can provide much support for the changing nature of constructive play as young children learn and develop.

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Designing Developmentally Appropriate Games for Preschool Children

Nancy Halliday

Hopping from lily pad to lily pad across a river, leaping gaping chasms, running from hungry lions - these are some of the things that occupy preschoolers' time. Preschoolers are busy learning how to use newly discovered skills that are possible for them because of steady growth and development changes that occur during this age period. They are aided in their explorations by a wonderfully vivid, active imagination. According to recent research findings on early brain development, the preschool years are a critical time for the development and refinement of fundamental motor skills (Gabbard, 1998). Fundamental motor skills developed during these years help to stimulate the development of the brain circuit "wiring" that makes possible later skill refinement and transition to more sport specific skills during the elementary school years. The key to maximizing learning during these early years is the opportunity to participate in developmentally appropriate play and game activities.

What makes game activities developmentally appropriate? If the physical, affective, and cognitive skills necessary for successful participation in the activity or game are consistent with the capabilities of the age group and the individual child, the activity is developmentally appropriate (Bredenkamp, 1997). Developmentally appropriate activities provide opportunities for children to practice skills within their psychomotor abilities in a context consistent with their affective and cognitive abilities. Developmentally appropriate activities provide challenges that are within the reach of preschoolers and encourage further skill development without being frustrating. The secret to designing effective developmentally appropriate activities is in comparing what we know about the age group characteristics and individual characteristics to the psychomotor, cognitive, and affective abilities required for successful participation in the activity or game.

Why are developmentally appropriate play experiences so important? Safety is a primary consideration in any activity for children. Games that are consistent with a child's abilities are more likely to result in safe participation. When children participate in games designed to match their level

of competence, games in which skill requirements are challenging but not frustrating, they experience greater success. Success and fun motivate children toward continued participation in physical activities. Success also increases feelings of competence, thus helping to increase children's self esteem. When teachers can design increasingly challenging tasks as skill improves, they can help individual children to move at their own developmental pace, thus providing conditions that are more conducive to success.

Developmentally appropriate game activities enable children to explore fully and develop each of their newly emerging stability (balances, axial, and springing movements), locomotor (walk, run, hop, skip, leap, slide, gallop, jump, roll), and manipu-

lative (throw, catch, kick, trap, volley, dribble, punt) skills. Children especially need practice with eye-hand and eye-foot coordination skills and bilateral skills (gallop, skip, hop) with alternate feet leading (Gallahue, 1998). Activities designed to enhance visual and kinesthetic perceptual motor ability (laterality, directionality, body image, directionality, spatial orientation, perception of whole and parts, size constancy, perception of movement, depth perception, figure-ground perception) provide practice in the selection, processing, organization, and integration of perceptual information necessary for successful skill performance (Haywood, 1993). Activities should be designed so that children can work on the quality of the movement and learning the correct skill pattern (Gallahue, 1996). Characteristics of

Figure 1

Developmental Characteristics and Implications for Game Activities
- Physical Growth Characteristics - Height ranges from 33" - 47" - Body is becoming more proportional as trunk and legs grow. - Body image lags behind body size increases. - Lack of wrist strength due to incomplete ossification of wrist bones. - Coordination developing as central nervous system development becomes complete. - Fine motor control not fully established. - Slow reaction time. Activity Implications - Smaller sized equipment is important for success. - Balance is improving. - Grip strength is limited. - Bilateral movements are a challenge. - Fine motor activities are a challenge. - Does not have good agility, cannot get out of the way of fast moving objects. (Provide practice with changes in speed, level, and direction)
Sensation and Perception Characteristics
- Preschoolers are farsighted; binocular vision still developing. - Body, directional, temporal, and spatial awareness still developing. - Depth perception and 3-dimensional tracking still developing. - Figure-ground perception is slowly improving but not yet mature. Activity Implications - Tracking objects in the air is a challenge, especially as trajectory, speed and distance increases. - Preschoolers need more space to do activities and to stop. "Busy" backgrounds make tracking skills harder - use plain backgrounds and contrasting color. - Manipulative objects to increase success. - Preschoolers need lots of practice with eye-hand and eye-foot coordination. Activities in which the object is moving rapidly, over long distances, or long distances, or with a high trajectory will be difficult.
Cognitive Characteristics
- Imaginative - Learning how and why of actions. - Preoperational thought - cannot think from third person perspective, egocentric, perceptions dominate, cannot reconstruct thought processes to show others how they arrived at their conclusions. Increasing ability to express thoughts and feelings verbally. Activity Implications - Use imitative and dramatic activities, stories, poetry, and music. - Use exploratory and guided discovery activities. - Use individual, parallel play and group activities not requiring cooperation rather than partner or group activities that require a lot of interaction or cooperation. - Give children a chance to talk about the movement or skills they are doing.
Affective Characteristics
- Developing autonomy and initiative. - Assumes everyone thinks the way they do. - Self-concept rapidly developing. Activity Implications - Invite to activity rather than giving yes or no choices. - Activities requiring sharing and cooperation will be a challenge. - Give positive feedback, encouragement and many opportunities for success.

children in the preschool age group provide information to guide teachers in arranging games and the environmental conditions under which these games are played so that children can play safely and experience success. These characteristics and implications for games play are listed in Figure 1 (Gallahue, 1996).

In addition to the activity implications that flow out of an understanding of the developmental characteristics of preschool aged children, the factors that determine the level of difficulty of games provide teachers with a framework from which to make choices about these games. These factors include: size, texture, and weight of projectiles and striking implements, size and movement characteristics of the target, trajectory and movement characteristics of the projectile, combinations of skills, number of people cooperating or competing, and rules of play (Haywood, 1993). The framework can be used for analysis of existing activities and games, creating new activities, and modifying activities to decrease or increase the level of difficulty, based on the teacher's observation of individual performances. Games that involve single skills practiced individually or in small non-cooperative, noncompetitive groups are easiest. The

level of challenge may be increased by linking skills together and having children work together in partners toward a common skill goal. In games involving manipulative skills, it is easiest for children to use small to medium sized lightweight, soft objects such as foam balls, yarn balls, or balloons. If targets are used, they should be large and stationary. If the goal of the activity is to intercept the object (catching, volleying, kicking and trapping) the trajectory of the objects should be fairly flat, the pathway predictable, and the speed slow, with little or no body adjustment required. If striking implements are used, they should be short and light (foam paddles work very well), and the striking surface should be large and flat. Whether you are planning more structured station practice activities, simple games, individual exploration, or guided discovery activities, the framework provided in Figure 2 (see next page) can help you to structure the tasks to meet the developmental level of students and create appropriate challenges.

No matter what motor skill preschoolers are busy learning, teachers can use the activity implications derived from preschoolers' developmental characteristics and the factors that determine the level of difficulty of games to select, create, and modify activities

to make them developmentally appropriate, providing for progressive challenges that are within children's reach. In this way, preschoolers will be able to participate safely and successfully while developing the skills necessary for a lifetime of participation in physical activity.

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Figure 2

Factors Affecting Level of Difficulty of Game Skills

	Easier	More Difficult
Size of Object Caught, Kicked, or Thrown	Smaller is easier to throw Medium is easier to catch	Large is harder to throw and catch
Striking Implements	Shorter is easier to control short can be moved faster Short requires less strength Large, flat surface is easier	Long is harder to control Long takes longer to move Long requires greater strength Narrow, round surface is more difficult
Weight of Object	Lighter is easier to manipulate	Heavier is more difficult
Texture of Object	Softer is easier to grip and less scary	Fully inflated is harder to grip
Size and Movement of Target	Large stationary target, smaller targets	Moving targets
Movement of Object being Caught, Struck, or Kicked	Stationary or slow movement Predictable pathway coming straight from ahead	Moving, fast movement Unpredictable movement coming straight from the side
Trajectory of Moving Object	Shallow or along the ground	High trajectory
Body Adjustments to Object	No movement required	Movement to intercept object
Movement Combinations	Single skills	Skills linked together
Number of People Cooperating and Competing	Individual activities Large groups	Partners Small groups
Rules	Few rules except those needed for safety	Many difficult rules governing movements

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A Closer Look At Playgrounds Centered Around A Theme

Joanne Margaret Hynes-Dusel

Playgrounds of today "... ain't what they used to be." That is, the steel frame "monkey bars," wooden seesaws, and aluminum slides we played on are "out," and playgrounds that center around a theme are "in." Case in point, the Science Playground (Flushing Meadows Park, New York) and the Underhill Playground (Kissena Corridor Park, New York).

The Science Playground opened in June, 1997. It took 11 years (including the initial planning and the two years it took to construct) and three million dollars to create. This is the largest science playground in the Western Hemisphere with 30,000 square feet of space and more than two dozen exhibits. The Science Playground is packed with exhibits that invite not only hands on, but whole body participation through the use of giant slides, whisper dishes, water play areas, light activated kinetic sculptures and a teeter-totter that balances a dozen children, just to name a few.

The science playground also sponsors many festivities and special weekends throughout the summer. For example, "Here Comes the Sun Weekend" was sponsored by M.I.T. (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). The M.I.T. solar electric vehicle team drove a solar powered car to the playground. Children learned to tell time using sundials and painted their faces with colored sun screen. Another festivity included learning about the transformation of energy by launching water rockets.

The science playground is divided into two levels: the upper level and the lower level. The upper level exhibits are experiments in sound and light. Some of the more popular exhibits include:

- (1) Energy wave. Children turn a wheel to send a wave down a 150 foot series of connected rods and purple balls in this demonstration of the physics wave.
- (2) Standing Spinner. Here, children learn about angular momentum and get dizzy at the same time. Children stand straight on a spinner, hold the pedestal firmly and push off with one foot. Leaning the body out makes the spinner come to a stop, and leaning the body back in creates the spinner to move fast again.
- (3) Speaking Tube. A child talks into one end of the tube and another child hears what the first child said on his/her end through hundreds of feet of tubing.
- (4) Sound Steps. Three wooden beams are

mounted in the floor like see-saws. The see-saw movement operates the bellows underneath which forces air through the musical pipes creating a variety of sounds. Children have 6 notes to work with.

(5) Octascope. This is a kaleidoscope with mirrors inside that take the scene in front of a person and breaks it into a thin wedge, then multiplies that wedge into 8 segments of a disk.

(6) Wobbly Bridge. The wooden beams used to walk across the bridge are suspended by chains so the foot beams move when a person tries to walk on it.

(7) Whisper Dishes. A child can communicate with a friend on the other side of the playground by whispering into and listening to the dish.

(8) Ball Run. The ball travels up the conveyor belt, slides into a plexiglass container, spirals down a funnel, and empties into a pinball machine where children have the chance to manipulate where the ball will go next.

(9) Tornado Column. Turning the crank fast creates a beautiful tornado.

(10) Sun Catchers and Kinetic Sculptures. Children use flat mirrors to direct sunbeams at the targets on the kinetic sculpture. If a person is successful in hitting one of the many targets there is a neat reward: sunbeams triggered propellers, and whirligigs, and turned on a fog machine.

(11) Slides. The children can choose one of two slides to slide down the 20 foot drop. One slide forces the child to travel a longer distance, but starts a child down faster. The other slide builds up speed steadily but much of the time is spent at lower speeds.

The lower exhibits include:

(1) Giant Seesaw. This is a big platform that is balanced around a pivot in the middle. Children try to balance the board in the middle.

(2) 3-D Spider Web. As the children climb on the web, they see and feel how the entire structure shifts to accommodate their weight and position because it's made of flexible steel reinforced rope. No matter how many people are on the web, each motion changes the whole structure. Each of the hexagon-shaped loops of rope changes angles to adjust to the child's weight and his/her new position.

(3) Water Works Section:

a. Archimedes Screw. There are actually three of these in the water works section. Water travels up the screw when the crank is turned.

b. Whirlpool Dish. As you turn the big wheel, water swirls into the dish first in one direction and then in the other.

c. Stream Table. Children can create their own rivers, dams and locks. They can see how currents vary their speed, depth and directions of flow.

The Underhill Playground was originally opened in 1953. It was designed to accommodate children of all ages and included a kindergarten area, wading pool, and sand pit, as well as basketball, handball, and shuffleboard courts and horse shoe pits. The playground was viewed as an important neighborhood improvement, serving as a public amenity and raising surrounding property values. It was the 598th playground built in the New York citywide park system.

This playground was reconstructed in 1997 through a \$764,000 capital project funded by a New York City council-member. The new design is based on the Russian folk tale of Wasalisa, a story of a young girl's rite of passage. Improvements included the creation of three play areas, and the installation of decorative fencing and safety surfacing. One of the three play areas includes the greatest theme ever, a playground that is devoted to the improvement of physical fitness.

Here, children work on improving balance while walking across a balance beam. Upper arm strength is enhanced by working out on the parallel bars, chin up bars and swinging from the overhead handles. Children play on different graded incline boards to work on increasing their abdominal strength. A child's flexibility is challenged and improves when trying to cross the arched bridge.

Unfortunately, there are only a couple of science-themed playgrounds in the United States and I have yet to come across a fitness-themed playground as comprehensive as this one. It is disheartening that only a handful of communities see the importance of developing a child's cognitive and/or physical abilities through play (at least to the extent these playgrounds do). I guess the people to blame are our nation's political leaders. Their idea of making our children smarter and healthier is through massive doses of academic learning. Teachers, parents and community citizens need to open the political leaders' eyes to see that "play is the way" to a smarter, healthier child.

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Plink Platter Plunk Play: Soundscapes and Playscapes

Rusty Keeler

The purpose of this article is to inspire you to think about sound in new ways and add sound exploration to the creative flow of outdoor play. Whether building a brand new playscape or adding to an existing one, this is for anyone interested in creating extra dimension and complexity with sound. As a model, I'll take you through the process of thinking and designing a soundscape project for Cornell University's Early Childhood Center - a lab school preK program for 3-5 year olds, which I recently experienced.

The project began with a gift of money from an alumnus. The only stipulation was that it should be used for children and music / sound exploration. The director decided to break up the funds between indoor classroom curriculum, and the outdoor playscape. I was hired to research and design the playscape. What a great project! Because play spaces are often the first places where children discover the world around them, playscapes should be as rich and diverse and complex as possible. As designers and facilitators of play, it is our job to create wonderful spaces for children to explore, question, share, and grow. Play spaces should be multi-layered with stimulation for all the senses. The question then becomes, how do you add the layer of sound to the outdoor experience? How can sound be an ambient background to play? An auditory by-product of play? A delightful object of play?

Soundscapes

I began by thinking about the idea of a "Soundscape" - the sounds that surround us everyday where we work, where we live, and where we play. One can think of the soundscape as being a "sound landscape." Often our memories are filled with the rattles, whooshes, and clanks of a place where we may have lived in the past. Those sounds are part of a rich experiential background in our lives. The soundscape idea brought me back to experiences in my own life. I once lived in Baltimore, MD and behind my apartment was the central train station. I'd drift off to sleep at night with the gentle whoo-whooping of the trains as they pulled in and the clickety clack of their wheels on the track. What at first seemed ordinary or even annoying soon became very soothing and special. When I moved away I found that I

deeply missed those familiar sounds. I recall a similar experience while living in The Netherlands. My life there was filled with the sounds of church bells ringing, horse hooves clomping and echoing along cobblestone streets and oompah bands practicing and parading. Like sonic landmarks, what are the "soundmarks" of your lives? What is the soundscape of the playscape?

The textures, smells, colors, sounds and tastes that we add to the playscape become the building blocks of sensory experiences for children. By adding sound and drawing attention to the sounds already around us, we are helping children become sensitive and conscious of the subtlety and diversity of the world around them. Besides that, it's fun to make sound!

Observing the Soundscape

The first step in designing the soundscape was the "observation stage." I began by studying the soundscape of the center's space. What are the sounds that occur there now? Which ones are man-made? Which ones are natural? Standing silently with my eyes closed, I heard birds in trees, wind rushing through leaves, cars humming on the street below, the beeping of an occasional backing up truck, and college students walking from class to class. Which sounds would we want to highlight? Which sounds might we want to downplay? I also looked at the greater community where the playscape was located. What sounds are unique to Cornell? To Ithaca, NY? The bell tower...Cornell's bell tower was in the news that year because of a Halloween prank by somebody who spiked a huge pumpkin on the tower's spire. We heard more about it because for the first time in 150 or so years the bells were being taken down and retuned. So, somehow, bells seemed important. I met with the school's "chime master" in hopes that somewhere in some dusty old basement there would be a pile of ancient bells that nobody used and we could mount up. No such luck. On a balcony outside the

art museum there is a set of tall standing sound sculptures that are activated by the wind or by touch. The museum staff wasn't happy with the touching part but with a little bit of research I located the sculptor himself and he agreed to sell us one of his small pieces for a huge discount. He too, believes that full experiencing often means touching.

It is also important to think about how play and the play environment change during the different seasons. In Ithaca we have extreme changes in the seasons, and everything is transformed. The colors of winter are completely different than those of summer. The ground squishes in some seasons, is frozen in another, and is soft and warm in others. The soundscape makes a dramatic change as well with leaves and birds leaving for the winter (cawing crows stick it out). Play activities undergo a transformation as the natural world transforms itself. How could sound add to this transformation? How could sounds change or help mark the change of the colors, climate, and mood of the landscape?

Observing Play

The next steps of the observation stage were to watch the children and to look at the special features that already existed in the environment. What are the unique places? What types of play go on where? How could sounds be added or slipped into those places and how could sounds correspond with the types of play that already go on? Quiet secluded getaway areas: what should those spots sound like - soft and twinkly? Loud, rambunctious wild-person areas: what sounds could relate there - loud, booming or shaking? I saw hollowed out tree stumps where children play inside, billowing forsythia they climb, hiding destination points, submerged tires as guard rails around trike tracks, magically shaped trees to play beneath, and areas where they "perform." Where do your children play? What types of play go on where?

I spent time watching the children's play indoors to compare inside and outside activities. I asked teachers to describe to me "the essence of the outdoors." What does the outdoor experience represent to them? What does it mean for the children? Some described outdoor play as a time of freedom: a rush to the outdoors for free exploration



and room to spread out. Others said that it was a time for the children to be on their own, away from the direct view of the teachers in a way much different from the confines of the classroom. The transition point from inside to outside seemed to be an important spot. Perhaps sound could be added to intensify that sudden feeling of freedom and space? Sound could act as an auditory signal marking that switch from indoors to outdoors and back.

I saw many similar play activities that occur indoors and outdoors. Often, the only thing that differed was the scale of the play. I watched a group of boys who while indoors, built and built and built rocket ships and space stations from legos and blocks. Outdoors the constructions continued, but with huge PVC pipes, boxes and tires. Sound and music could relate in the same way. If teachers are using musical instruments in the class room - drums and marimbas and chimes - perhaps the outdoors could contain the same instruments on a grander scale, such as, for example, huge drums that could be pounded with hands or feet. Or giant chimes that tower over you, instead of the other way around. Or wooden marimbas that can be played as loud and for as long as children want. Look at activities and how playing a variety of instruments could add that "outdoor essence" - that extra sense of freedom, space, and full body movement to playing and enjoying.

It is also important at the observation stage to get valuable input from the children themselves. Ask and you shall receive! One boy with a hint of DaVinci in his eyes would continuously rattle off great ideas, plus the materials and the means to make and install them! (I wanted to hire him but his mom wanted him to finish kindergarten first.) Remember to involve children in the planning process and incorporate their ideas in the design.

Research

Music has been a part of every culture and every civilization throughout history. Flipping through a few picture books from the library can provide a world of new ideas. What instruments have people used to make sound? What materials do they use? What do the instruments look like? What do they sound like? What was the music used music for? How can you take what others have done and apply it to the playscape? There are many books on the subject, which contain many ideas on making instruments.

You'll find things made from bamboo and bone, things you throw, kick, yell into and pluck. Maybe some of the instruments and materials could be reproduced, bought directly, or perhaps translated into more "modern" materials such as metal and plastic or rubber. Look in your classrooms and community. What cultures might you find there? We had Indonesian parents donate tiny beautiful bronze bells. Unfortunately, often instruments for children are cheap, clanky and not very harmonious. Here's a chance to give children deep, rich sounds that resonate inside the body, sounds that are full and meaningful and are felt as well as heard such as gongs, bells, deep drums, and steel drums. What other kinds of odd instruments and sound sculptures can be found in the environment? I found books showing people making sound pieces with keys, old jugs, pot lids, drum brakes from trucks, springs from cars and more. When I saw some of these experimental instruments, I found myself tapping and banging on every appliance I owned and every guardrail and piece of metal I passed on the street. If there are any metal scrap yards in your area I suggest making an appointment to stop in and browse. They can be gold mines for strange old metal parts that sound beautiful. Steel and aluminum sound great, not to mention copper, bronze and brass. Often the people who work there can be very helpful and generous if they know what you want it for. With a careful eye and ear you can find things that are safe, funky and remarkably great sounding. (Don't mind the looks you might get as you are wading through the yard tapping everything with a drumstick!)

Putting it All Together

After loading your brain full of soundscape thoughts and observations it's time to let the ideas flow. There are three ways to think about sound on the playscape:

(1) Sound as ambient background to play: wind and the elements making natural sounds and activating sound elements on playscape. These create a mood and colorful backdrop to everything that is happening. They create the feel and texture of being in outside space. Chimes, kites, aeolian harps, and rain catchers can be used for background sounds.

(2) Sounds as a by-product of play: sound elements placed where they will be incidentally jostled and jiggled by children during normal play. The sounds should correspond to the types of play that frequently go on in

particular areas. These sounds may help to shape and add dimension to the styles of play. They could include bells, chimes, shakers, and things that sound funny as you run or jump over them.

(3) Sound as the object of play: the sound-making station, performance areas, places where the goal or activity is to make and listen to sounds. Large instruments, talking tubes, echo tubes, or focused listening spots can be included in sound-making stations.

The following are some suggestions and ideas that I have installed with the help of parent volunteers. To which of the above categories do they fit? Some ideas are simple "off the shelf" items you can buy, while others are one-of-a-kind fabricated pieces.

Singing Sock - A large fluttering wind-sock that rustles in the wind. Bells or whistles could be added for extra effect during high wind times. It is placed in a secluded spot where children go out on "adventures." The sock becomes a surprise element of sound and color that magically comes to life and signifies a gust of wind. The idea was translated from a black garbage bag that was stuck in a tree in that location. When the wind blew the bag rustled and billowed and drew lots of interested attention.

Listening dishes - Spots to stop and focus on the sounds around us. These are located in a far corner that borders some woods. Mounting cooking woks with an ear hole, or traffic cones to the chain link fence at ear height draw in sound and invites the children to stop listen. What is going on out there? What do you hear? Perhaps two could be placed apart and become communication stations.

Pampas Grass Fort - Planted around an existing destination point of a small sitting stump, the grass helps create a semi-enclosed space. When it reaches it's full height it will tower above the children and create great rustling when the wind blows and as children brush through it to get to the stump.

Talk Tubes - Two different types were used. A "spy tube" of PVC pipe that wraps around a storage shed lets children who are hiding in the space behind the shed communicate with others "exposed" in front. The "Kid-Cornellian Connection" is a long distance steel-fabricated tube with one end on the playscape, and the other along the sidewalk where college students and professors walk to classes. "Hey you! Where are you going?" surprise many passersby.

Echo chambers – There are a series of drains on the playscape that had great echo potential. Facilities people determined that they were safe to use, so we fabricated new covers with shouting holes and strung a hanging xylophone on the underside. Children can yank the ball activator and play the chimes or lay down and yell. The manholes are connected with others in the yard and people in different areas can hear strange sounds mysteriously rise up out of the ground.

Twinkle Tree – A beautiful tree with long, low, bending branches was calling for a set of delicate chimes to be strung along the under side of its "arms." Fabricated from thin aluminum rod, the chimes can be activated by strumming with a stick or by shaking the branch.

Season Wind Chimes – While thinking about how sound can change or signal the seasons, I found a set of 4 chimes made by "Woodstock Percussion" that are tuned to Vivaldi's "Four Seasons." We painted them to match each season and now have the ritual "changing of the chimes" at the beginning of each new season. Each chime has a unique feel and mood that is reflective of its season. These are hung near the entrance to the playscape to "set the mood."

Entrance Chimes – A set of long, tuned, tube chimes hung right at the entrance to the playscape on an existing railing. Children hit them as they rush out into the yard, "beeLING!" and then on their way back in, "BEElung!" The entrance chimes are made from beautiful aluminum chimes from "Grace Note Chimes."

Stump Bell – Simple sounds stuck inside the crotch of a huge hollow stump in the ground. The stump is big enough for children to crawl into, and pass stuff through the openings. Instead of a bell, a set of wooden wind chimes was hung in an opening. They rattle and clunk when hit. (Wood sounds made more sense to put in a wooden stump.)

Jingle Tree – Mystical cowbells from India were hung in a tree that children shake and climb. Each bell is tuned differently so that each branch that is shaken makes a different sound. There is also a jingle forsythia bush where we hung tiny bronze bells. We're lucky enough to have a musical import store to find gems like those. Maybe you do too? A catalogue "Lark in the Morning" specializes in "ethnic" instruments. Look for it on the web!

Thunder Drum – A giant 4-foot in diame-

ter galvanized steel drum with six attached mallets and room for many children to pound (and pound and pound). Inspired by Sonic Architecture's "Earthdrum," it is planted in the ground and comes up to a four year old's belly.

Standing Chimes – A set of 4 large tuned chimes (3 to 5 foot high) that are stationary and activated by hitting with rubber mallets. They are made from standard galvanized pipe, the kind used with chain link fences. It's fun to have some instruments that you have to look up to.

Giant Marimba and Tongue Drums – Made by Bond Anderson. These add other woody sounds to balance metal materials.

Tire Bells – Add sounds to an existing row of tires planted half way in the ground acting as a trike track guardrail. Inside each tire was placed a chime, a cowbell, a jingle bell or rattle. Jumping, kicking, or bumping trikes activates these. At first, I mounted sounds in every other tire with the idea that it would add surprise and mystery in finding which tires made sound. No way. The overwhelming children's response was "more bells!" So more bells it was. Each tire got a sound and the children were kept happy.

Conclusion

For the children at Cornell's Early Childhood program sound has added dimension and surprise to their adventures. The real triumph is when the children adopt sounds into role-playing and use them as a natural part of their play repertoire. Some sounds become signals for new games. The ringing of the Twinkle Tree marks the beginning of "The Princess Game," the wooden chimes of the stump signal changes in games. The entrance chimes are used exiting, entering and during outdoor playtime. Recently a teacher described a boy standing about 10 feet away from the chimes tossing small pebbles their way. Every so often one would hit a random chime. When asked what he was playing he replied, "when I hear the sound I win!"

I hope this article sparks your imagination to try out your own ideas about adding sound exploration to the playscape. I would be very happy to share more ideas or brainstorm with anybody interested, so please feel free to contact me. But don't stop with sound. As you look at your play space and observe what goes on where, think about how smells could be added to spaces in the same way as sound. How could different areas be made up of differing textures?

What tastes could be added to deepen the total experience and feelings of place that you create for children?

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Suppliers
Grace Note Chimes (800) 228-4463
<www.gracenotes.com>

Lark in the Morning (707) 964-5569
<www.larkinam.com>

Woodstock Percussion (800) 422-4463
Bond Anderson (912) 623-5545

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Meaningful Play with Art and Music

Joyce A. Zucker

The following contains two original songs and several art experiences that reflect a multicultural play theme. Each activity can be sung to a familiar tune or read aloud as children in preschool through grade four are challenged to act out the movements. Each song is prefaced with general information that can be shared with the children to enhance the play session, followed by the suggested art projects.

The Frog

One of the most fascinating animals in the world is the frog. Frogs are extremely versatile creatures. They began at the time of the great, huge dinosaurs. Those giants, who dominated for millions of years, are long gone; but the frogs are still here. There are frogs in every country of the world. Some are as small as your thumbnail. Such a small one is a Coci frog, which is native to only Puerto Rico—and is therefore their national symbol. On the other hand, the Goliath Frog of Africa grows over three feet long. Frogs come in every color of the rainbow plus brown, black, white, and pink, multi colored, two tone, polka dotted, striped and abstract designed.

I have a little song called THE FROG; HE DID NOT AGREE. It is very versatile; I use it with all grades nursery through fourth. It is written in the vernacular and has a calypso beat, which immediately classifies it as multi-cultural.

If the group is very young, you might discuss the song as it is written, since it describes a child's ritual of nighttime activities. Another playful activity involves an art assignment by either drawing and painting or using a torn paper. To begin, have the children pick a scenic from the song without revealing which one. At the end of the lesson organize a show and tell session where the rest of the class tries to guess which scene each portrayed.

With older children you could discuss similarities and differences between frogs and people. This could lead into discussion of ecology or multi-culturalism by explaining the majority of countries are populated, mostly by people's who's families date back many hundreds of years —maybe thousands, in the same culture and background. Here, in the United States, we have people of many different backgrounds living and sharing and contributing their ideas. The different frog families have also evolved over time until each has it's own special needs, size and colors.

The Native American

Play enhances the child's understanding of the land all other items found outdoors. The following song reinforces the value of child's natural environment, and can be sung or read following an outdoor play experience. In addition, the Native Americans' respect for nature and its inhabitants is so poignant that I use the Native American Sign language with the chorus of the following original ecology song.

The indigenous Americans are very wise and clever people. They devised a picture language that is beautiful in its simplicity and so easy to draw and understand because of its continuity progressing and building one idea upon the next. The following sparks the children's imagination, and provides many hours of play as the children construct simple Native American items.

ALL MUST SHARE THE LAND ON HAND

Chorus:

The Earth is 70% water
That leaves only 30% for land
That means: things living there,
That have got to breathe air,
Must all share
The land on hand

1) Man appeared on Earth
And decided: he
Could do anything he pleased
He dammed up rivers
Cemented the ground
And cut down forests of trees
(Repeat Chorus)

2) Man killed flocks of birds
Animals by herds
All for his selfish devotion
In his delusion

He caused pollution
Destroy both land and ocean
(Repeat Chorus)

3) Man's no dinosaur
He has got much more
Intellectual distinction
His wonderful brain
Tells him to refrain
From what might cause his extinction
(Repeat Chorus)

4) Now, we must practice
Science, Mathematics
All our SU-PER-I-OR talents
We must do our share
To restore, repair
And maintain nature's own balance
(Repeat Chorus)

Native American Picture Language

The symbol for "MAN" is made by drawing a small circle for the head. Add a tiny line down from the bottom for the neck, then a horizontal line across the bottom for the shoulders. From each end of the horizontal line draw a diagonal so they cross in the middle forming a big X; this becomes the body and the legs. From the ends of the shoulders hang the arms. To draw a "WOMAN"; draw the same figure as the man then draw a horizontal line between the legs to form the skirt. Children are the same except smaller. Older people are the same except all the lines are curved and they carry a walking stick. Friends hold hands. Relatives walk the same ground — they get two (2) ground lines. A TEEPEE is but one type of many types of Indian houses, however, the symbol for the "house" is a teepee. To indicate a village; draw the symbol for "house" then add a mark for each house in the village— around the teepee. Similarly, a campfire becomes a council fire by putting a mark for each person or tribe represented at the council. Make "magic" lines above the

THE FROG; HE DID NOT AGREE:

Chorus:

(Children clap in rhythm)
He hop, hop, JUMPED away
He hop, hop, JUMPED away
He hop, hop, JUMPED away
He hop, hop, JUMPED away
And he did not get back to this very day
1) A frog was playing in a pool
I told him, "Frog, don't be a fool
You'd do well to come home with me"
But, that frog, he did not agree

Chorus:

2) I put that frog on the table
I told him, "Eat, as you're able
You'd do well to eat here with me."
But, that frog, he did not agree

Chorus:

3) I put that frog into the tub
I told him, "Frog, now rub and scrub.
You'd do well to be clean as me."
But, that frog, he did not agree

Chorus:

4) I put the frog into my bed
I told him, "Frog, lay down your head.
You'd do well to sleep here with me."
But, That frog he did not agree

Chorus:

5) That frog, he jumped down to the lake
I told him, "Frog it's a mistake.
You'd do well to live at home with me."
But, that frog, he did not agree.

He hop, hop, JUMPED away
He hop, hop, JUMPED away
Now he lives in that lake to this very day.

white doctor, Indian doctor, rain and snow, showing that they have power to heal and keep you alive and healthy.

No subject exists in a vacuum. There is Art, Music, Science, and Math in everything we do. There is no reason why you can not teach shapes and letters, colors and numbers by baking cookies—and subtraction as you eat them. There are great art works and music for every topic; bring them in. The entire history of humankind can be told in art and music, and experienced in purposeful play activities.

MAKE A TEEPEE AND/CANOE:

1) Take a piece of 8 1/2" x 11" paper and fold it in half.

2) Fold the corners toward the center (do not touch the center line).

3) Fold up the front, bottom flap.

4) Fold the corners of the front flap back.

FOR TEEPEE ONLY:

T1) Place your thumbs inside, and push the corners together until your thumbs touch.

T2) This should make a square. Crease tightly.

T3) Form the teepee by spreading it open and resting it on a flat surface (table) so that it is tipped back on the side with the unfolded flaps.

FOR CANOE ONLY:

C1) Fold the corners of the flap inside.

C2) Fold up the point and tuck it under the fold.

C3) Spread the canoe open at the center.

Decorate your teepee and/ or canoe with Native American Picture Language. Draw your family and friends, show if they are happy, sad, good, or bad. Perhaps someone deserves a reward. Show the leader(s) of your household.

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Part Four: Play and Fitness

Introduction

Recent reports on physical fitness have suggested that American children are among the least physically fit children in the world. This should be cause for concern to parents and educators because lack of physical fitness in the early years can eventually contribute to serious health conditions in later years. However, given the lifestyle of many young people today, it is not surprising that the problem exists. Many children spend much of their free time watching television or playing computer games—both sedentary activities. The diets include many fast food or junk items that contribute to developing unhealthy bodies. In many cases, the opportunity to participate in games and sports are limited to those children, particularly boys, who are athletically inclined. More importantly, recent brain research is pointing out that physical activity and physical health are important contributors to cognitive development. It is time to reassess our thinking about physical fitness and strive to offer fitness activities to all our children. After all, their health is important to the future.

This section on fitness addresses some issues and concerns about physical fitness from research to practical ideas on how to incorporate movement in the everyday lives of young children. *Clark* discusses gender labeling of activities for girls and boys. Boys' games are typically more aggressive and action oriented as opposed to girls' games. She offers some suggestions on how to encourage participation of both boys and girls in all types of activities. *Crist* presents a research study that confirms that directed physical fitness activities enhance self-concept, academic grades, and classroom conduct. *Hudson and Thompson* discuss the issues of safety on playgrounds and identify areas of risk in playground environments. In another study, *Jarrett and Young* offer some interesting findings on the recess games in urban schools. Yet again it confirms other research findings that involvement in a variety of outdoor games seemed to result in a low incidence of negative behavior: children seemed to learn how to resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner. *Langley* describes a "motivation and movement" classroom, which includes over 20 structures that not only encourage physical activity, but also cognitive growth and creative exploration. *Liebler* discusses importance in incorporating happiness, smiles and a little silliness into movement activities and gives ideas for such activities from "crazy conducting" to "wacky waving." Finally, *Pica* summarizes supportive research for physical activity for young children to promote a healthy lifestyle and lower incidences of elevated cholesterol, high blood pressure, and obesity.

Gender Labeling of Physical Activities in Young Children

Loretta Clark

There is a definite distinction in gender roles for boys and girls in the United States. Studies have shown that parents tend to treat their infants differently, depending on their gender (Lewko & Greendorfer, 1982). It is most often an unconscious behavior, but it happens nonetheless. Girls are touched and talked to more often than boys, and boys tend to be allowed to explore more than girls. The tendency in our society is to socialize boys to be aggressive, competitive and tough, while girls are socialized to be nurturing, caring, and understanding (Griffin, 1989; Thorne, 1995).

By using language, labeling is the means in which concepts are developed and formed. Are gender role identities also formed this way? Let's think about it. When we mention doctor most people imagine a man, and, conversely, when the nurse is called upon we expect a woman to respond. Labeling is simply a method used to categorize items, thus developing conceptions. Studies have shown that gender labeling begins early in a child's life, which leads to stereotypical labeling and behavior (Fagot & Lienbach, 1989; Fagot, Lienbach, & O'Boyle, 1992; Stern & Karraker, 1989). Along with labeling, parents also tend to provide sex-typed toys even before the child demonstrates a preference (Pomerleau, Boldue, Malcuit, & Cossette, 1990). With all of the aforementioned circumstances, the groundwork for the concept of gender is being laid and is manifest in labeling practices.

As children get older and their conception of gender becomes more defined the activities in which they participate and the games they play reflect their prior socialization. For example, football is considered a boy's sport because it is competitive; you have to be aggressive and tough to play the game. Girls, on the other hand, are supposed to love and nurture their dolls or play cooperative games like jump rope. Thus, they have internalized the social construction of "gender appropriate" games and activities by the time they reach kindergarten (Chepyator-Thompson & Ennis, 1997; Lewko & Greendorfer, 1982). This phenomenon can clearly be observed when watching children play on the playground at school. The boys are usually playing football, kickball, and other activities that are aggressive and take up a lot of space. Girls are usually playing with each other's hair, walking around, or playing jump rope. Preschoolers in the classroom also show

signs of preconceived gender roles with girls choosing make-believe and housekeeping centers and boys choosing blocks and trucks to play with (Lewko & Greendorfer, 1982; Suito & Reifel, 1993).

With this as a background the author set out to investigate, through a small sample pilot study, whether boys and girls label physical activities as male or female specific. The limited sample of four children included one five-year-old Caucasian female from an upper-middle-class background, one five-year-old Caucasian male from a middle-class background, one six-year-old African-Mexican-American female from a lower-middle-class background, and one six-year-old Caucasian male from an upper-middle-class background. The five-year-olds had attended preschool and were going to start kindergarten, the six-year-olds were going to start first grade, and all of the children would be attending public schools.

This study indicated that the six-year-old children were more stereotypical in labeling physical activities than the five-year-olds. Unlike previous findings (Ignico & Mead, 1990; Lewko & Greendorfer, 1982; Pellet & Harrison, 1992), the boys in this study were found to be less stereotypical in their gender labeling than the girls. The younger children were also less stereotypical than the older children were. While both boys and girls tended to label the activities as gender-neutral, the boys tended to label more activities as male-specific than female and the girls tended to label them equitably. In the same manner, the 5-year-olds were inclined to label the male-and female-specific activities equally. But, the 6-year-olds labeled more of the activities as male-specific. Again, the small sample is recognized, and may account for some of the results.

In a study performed by Martin, Bisenbud, and Rose (1995), it was found that children used gender labels and their own preferences to answer questions about toy preferences of others. With this in mind it is viable that the children in this study labeled the activities according to what they liked or disliked themselves, not which gender they thought would like to do the activity as a whole. The results of the preschoolers labeling more activities as gender-neutral than the children who attended school should lead us to question whether or not there is a hidden curriculum in schools that contributes to stereotypical gender labeling in children. Thus, further

research with larger samples of young children is necessary to validate this concern.

Research shows that there are strategies that teachers can implement to help eliminate some of the hidden curriculum problems in physical education specifically and in school in general. Encouraging boys and girls to participate in any and all activities available is a first step. Eliminating gender-biased comments like telling a girl how "pretty" she looks and a boy how "handsome" he looks and replacing them with how "nice" they look is another possibility. Other strategies that would help make schools a more equitable place for boys and girls alike are, eliminating games of boys versus girls, lining boys and girls up separately, and allowing boy's misbehavior just because "boys-will-be-boys." Lastly, it is essential to devise a curriculum that is appealing to both genders.

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The Effects of Directed Fitness Activities and Free-Play Time on the Self-Concept and Classroom Performance of Sixth-Grade Students

Randy Crist

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of directed fitness activities and free-play time on sixth grade students in relation to their self-concept, academic grade average, and classroom conduct. Also measured was the effect on aerobic fitness and body composition.

Literature

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) has gone on record saying young adolescents must be healthy in order to learn. Physical activity is a key ingredient of good physical and mental health, which is a critical goal of the core instructional program for all students. There is a large volume of existing research on the effects of physical activity on factors such as social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development. A relatively small percentage of research, though, examines the effects of physical activity on children (Clark, 1986).

Much of the information available to teachers and school administrators regarding the effects of exercise on children is not based on scientific fact. Popular forms of play and physical education philosophies come and go. Writing for the American Academy of Physical Education, Clarke (1986) said that research could help us understand some of the mechanisms underlying physical activity that affect children. Kirkendall (1986) reviewed the effects of physical activity on intellectual development and academic performance and stated, "unfortunately, there have been very few experimental studies in this area. There is no conclusive evidence, pro or con, on the actual effects that exercise has on intellectual development. This entire area of study has yet to be seriously explored (p. 62)."

The transition from childhood to a young adult can also be a traumatic experience for many, having a lasting effect on their emotional state (Ziller, Hagey & Smith, 1969). There are many frustrations in dealing with peer pressure, parent relationships, academic challenges, and the physical changes brought on by puberty. The development of a positive self-concept is important for a person to be happy and to be able to relate well with others in society. A good self-concept comes from a person feeling good about their life and their abilities, and this results in the belief that others think well of them too

(Wylie, 1974). The students, who are self-confident and feel good about themselves most often, seem to be the ones who handle these situations well and enter high school as stable young adults. For others who doubt themselves and their abilities, the result may be academic failure, misconduct, and social rejection, increasing the likelihood of quitting school before graduation (Beane & Lipka, 1987).

Numerous studies and reviews on the relationship of fitness or play to student conduct (MacMahon, 1990), adolescent self-concept (Fox, 1988), body-esteem (Mendelson & White, 1982), and attitudes towards physical activity (Simon & Smoll, 1974) have yielded promising but inconclusive results. It is clear, too, that research on the effects of activity on adolescent development is critically needed. For example, further research is suggested (Segrave, 1983) to gain more insight into the role of sport or fitness for the possible prevention of juvenile delinquency or the resocialization of delinquents.

Study

This investigation explored the relationship between two activity levels and three dependent variables; self-concept, academic grade average, and classroom conduct. Also measured was the effect the treatments had on aerobic fitness, body composition, and body-esteem to see if they contributed any significant influence on the primary dependent variables.

For this study 229 students received treatment for 30 minutes, 4 days a week for 12 weeks. One-half of the subjects (the "directed" group) received directed fitness activities during treatments, while the others (the "undirected" group) were allowed free-play time. Test results were compared to the 12 weeks prior to treatments when no physical activity or free-play time was provided in the school day.

Activity level was measured by Caltrac accelerometers. Directed subjects were found to be nearly twice as active during treatment sessions when compared to those receiving free-time and were undirected. Measured by a pre- and post-test 12-minute run, the directed subjects improved by a statistically significant margin in aerobic fitness, the free-play subjects did not. Significant differences were also found between the two groups with regard to change in total self-concept as measured by the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Inventory. Directed subjects improved 2.5% while those nondirected fell 3.1%. The same pattern was found in the measurement of body-esteem (see table)

Classroom performance was evaluated by comparing the scores received in Math, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies during the 12 weeks prior to the scores received during the 12 weeks of treatments. In both the areas of academic performance and conduct there were significant differences in how the groups changed. Directed subjects improved 1.2% in academic grades, while students receiving free-play time decreased by 0.2% (table 1).

Classroom conduct was evaluated by averaging the conduct grades received in Math, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies during the 12-week period. Both groups received lower conduct scores during the 12 weeks of treatment than they did prior to the test period, but the non-directed subjects fell by a significantly greater margin than the directed subjects did. Within the limitations of this study, the following conclusions appear to be warranted. 1.) It is possible to reduce or reverse the decline in positive self-concept normally associated with emerging adolescence with a systematic program of directed aerobic fitness activities.

Table 1

Variable	Group	January M (SD)	April M (SD)	Difference
Self Concept	Test a	54.81 (12.47)	56.77 (12.76)	1.96*
	Control b	54.74 (14.93)	52.17 (13.95)	-2.57*
Academic Grades	Test	86.32 (10.38)	87.47 (8.83)	1.15*
	Control	88.01 (8.11)	87.79 (8.04)	-0.22*
Conduct	Test	3.43 (0.61)	3.36 (0.68)	-0.08*
	Control	3.49 (0.69)	3.31 (0.83)	-0.18*

a Directed n = 117

b Free-Play n = 112

*p ≤ .05

- 2.) Organized aerobic exercise programs will benefit the classroom academic performance.
- 3.) Organized aerobic exercise programs will aid in the maintenance of proper classroom conduct.
- 4.) Students who are directed to participate in activities that are high in aerobic fitness properties will be more active, and improve in measurable fitness values, when compared to students receiving free-play time.

Discussion and Implications

The results of this investigation indicated that directed aerobic activities are superior to free-play time, or "recess," in the middle school setting. Many school administrators believe that if time is to be set aside for activities other than the core academic subjects, then those activities should be justified educationally. Physical education should be, and can be, an important part of the school curriculum. Improving physical fitness, developing positive self-concept, joining in the team effort of improving classroom performance are worthy and attainable goals for any middle school physical education program.

The changes that developed as a result of the treatment in this study make a convincing argument for a strong physical education program on the sixth-grade level. In addition to the important health aspects of exercise, administrators and classroom teachers should be aware of these findings and other similar research. Promoting the positive benefits physical education can contribute to the total education package may help to curb the current trends of budget cuts, curtailment of classes, and staff reductions that are a threat to the physical education profession.

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Reducing "Risk" on Playgrounds

Susan D. Hudson and Donna Thompson

Prevention has as its primary mission a goal to make America's Playgrounds Safe. Each year over 200,000 children are hurt on our nation's playgrounds seriously enough to warrant a trip to an emergency room (Hudson, Thompson, & Mack, 1996). On an average, seventeen children die due to a playground incident (Ibid.). As a result, NPPS has been involved in a four-year national educational campaign to raise awareness about playground safety.

Figure 1
Interactive Model



Safety, of and by itself, however, has little benefit, if the result is a sterile play environment. For the play environment to help in the development of a child's physical, emotional, social and intellectual development, it should present challenge, excitement and stimulation. At the same time, a play environment which utilizes life threatening risk situations, such as a fourteen-foot slide over a hard surface, to challenge the child's abilities is also inappropriate. What is needed in the play milieu is an environment which produces relatively low risk while promoting high play value. How can this be done?

One approach is to develop a theoretical construct which depicts the interaction between "risk" and "play value." This paper will present a preliminary theoretical construct and discuss in detail, the risk component of the construct which is based on the work of the National Program for Playground Safety.

Definition of Terms

Prior to discussion of the theoretical model, a few terms need to be defined. Safety is defined as the "freedom from risk of injury." There is no perfectly safe playground. The nature of children's play will lead to scraped knees, abrasions, and even an occasional broken limb. However, in our national program, we are attempting to prevent both severe (permanently disabling injuries) and life-threatening injuries (strangulation, brain trauma).

Risk is defined as the "exposure to the chance of injury." The words risk and challenge are sometimes used interchangeably in discussions about playgrounds. However, it is the authors' contention that this is a misuse of these words and leads only to confusion. Why would one purposely try to expose children to a chance of injury?

Risk factors are those items which contribute to the overall possibility that an injury will occur. For instance, when one speaks of the risk factors concerning heart disease, one looks to items such as smoking, overweight, age, gender, etc. which taken as a whole "increase" the probability that a heart attack will occur. In the same light, we can identify items within the playground environment which, taken together, "increases" the probability that an injury will occur. At the National Program for Playground Safety, we have identified four areas of risk within the playground environment. They are:

- 1) Supervision of the Playground
- 2) Age Appropriate Design of the Play Area
- 3) Fall Surfacing
- 4) Equipment and Surface Maintenance

We will discuss these items in greater detail in the next section.

A child should not be exposed to "risks" on the playground, but to "challenges." Challenge is defined as an "opportunity to engage in a contest of skill, strength, endurance, etc." It can also refer to difficulty in an undertaking that is stimulating. Certainly, we want children to be able to "challenge" their abilities on the playground, since this is a stimulating behavior. Stimulation is one of the essential elements of play. As Owens (1997) states: "Playgrounds are places for children to safely explore experiences that are out of the ordinary. . . . The playground is there to allow for further exploration, in the context of play, that which will help children stretch their physical and intellectual abilities, social and emotional skills, and learn some basic principles that can be applied to life in the world" (p. 56). Thus, the play value of the play environment refers to how a playground provides developmentally appropriate experiences for physical challenges - gross motor and fine motor skills; intellectual challenges - spatial exploration at a variety of scales, use of imagination, opportunities to manipulate the environment to see cause and effect; emotional challenges - feelings of mastery

and success; and social challenges - opportunities for cooperation and interaction. The issue, then, is how to reduce risks but create challenge. Therein lies the relationship between risk factors and play value within a play environment.

Theoretical Construct

As mentioned in the introduction, both risk factors and play value should be viewed together in order to produce a safe, but challenging play environment. To do this, the authors have developed the following theoretical continuum model (See Figure 1).

As shown in this model, risk factors and play value are separate and distinct dimensions. A high score on one dimension does not necessitate a low score on the other. Conversely, a playground which is high in risk factors is not necessarily high in play value. Rather, the play environment can be explained as any mix of both dimensions. What constitutes the risk factors and play value dimensions?

Risk Factors

The horizontal continuum has to do with risk factors. As related earlier, playground risk factors can be describe in terms of four areas - supervision, age appropriate design, falls to surfaces, and equipment maintenance. A brief description of these four areas follows:

(1) **Supervision** - Children need to be supervised while on a playground. It is estimated that more than 40 percent of playground injuries may be related to inadequate supervision (King, 1990). Children should have the opportunity to explore their physical capabilities and limits, but always in the presence of a watchful adult. It is critical that playground supervisors be trained, so they can adequately protect the children. Such training should include knowledge about playground safety and injuries such as, learning how to visually scan the playground for potential hazards, and when to intercede in potentially dangerous play patterns.

(2) **Age Appropriate Design** - While there are many factors that lead to playground injuries, a major cause is the mismatch between children's abilities and playground design. Children who play on equipment that is not appropriate for their size, strength, and decision-making abilities may be exposed to life-threatening injuries. That's why there are standards for the manufacture of equipment for ages 2-5 years and

ages 5-12 years. Providing separate areas for younger and older children not only accommodates the children's needs, but also allows better supervision. A five year-old does not have the same developmental needs as a 12 year-old.

(3) **Falls to Surfaces** - Falls to hard surfaces under and around playground equipment are cited as contributing factors in more than 70 percent of the reported incidents by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. In one nationwide study, it was found that 80 percent of playground surfaces were inappropriate. Surfaces that should never be found under and around playground equipment include asphalt, cement, dirt, and grass. Loose fill surfaces that can absorb the shock of children's falls include sand, pea gravel, wood products, and rubber products. When installed properly, these surfaces are effective in preventing or reducing the severity of injuries. (One other point concerning surfacing and age appropriate design. While there is no federal regulation regarding the height of equipment, the National Program for Playground Safety recommends that equipment for 5 - 12 year olds not be any higher than eight feet. There are several reasons for this. First, all testing on surfacing has been limited to a height no higher than twelve feet (the head form mechanism used in testing only extends to 12 feet). Thus, we do not know the characteristics of surfacing over that height. A four-foot child standing on top of an eight-foot slide is the equivalent of a twelve-foot fall. Second, anything higher than eight feet is the equivalent of asking a child to step out of a second story window with some uncertainty regarding the appropriate depth of surface materials to absorb the fall. Finally, there has been no research to date to point to the fact that "play value" is increased with the height of the equipment.)

(4) **Equipment Maintenance** - Poor maintenance is estimated to be a contributing factor in at least 30 percent of playground injuries. Items such as broken or rusted equipment, exposed hard surfaces, protruding bolts and gaps which can entangle drawstrings need to be either repaired or removed before they cause life-threatening injuries to children. A playground which is allowed to fall into disrepair through neglect poses an extremely hazardous situation for children for despite the condition of the playground, children will try to play on the equipment.

One final note about these four areas of risk. They are not isolated from one another.

Rather it is the interaction of all four areas which can enhance the probability of injury. For instance, if a four-year-old is taken to a park and allowed to get on an eight-foot overhead ladder, there is a high probability that she will fall. An eight-foot overhead ladder is inappropriate for her four-year-old strength and ability. The point is, she should not be on the ladder is the first place (inappropriate supervision/age appropriate design). If the fall surface is asphalt, concrete, dirt or grass, she can sustain a life-threatening injury (fall to surface). Or if the surface is appropriate, but not at the proper depth for the height of the equipment (equipment maintenance), she is still in danger of a serious injury. Thus, to be effective, one must work on all four areas of the risk factors dimension, not simply work to reduce specific dangers found in one area.

Play Value:

While the horizontal continuum is risk, the vertical continuum of the model is the play value dimension. This dimension contains the opportunities present in the playground environment that contribute to the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of the child. It is an area that needs further research and refinement by people such as the members of IPA who can examine the configuration of the play environment and describe the play value components present. An attempt to do something along this line has occurred in England with the efforts of Peter Heseltine. However, more study is needed in relation to ways that America's playgrounds are configured in order to develop a meaningful play environment.

What It All Means

In using the two dimensional model found in Figure 1, four different possibilities emerge for playground environments (see Figure 2). These are:

- quadrant 1 - playgrounds that have low risk factors and low play value;
- quadrant 2 - playgrounds that have high risk factors and low play value;
- quadrant 3 - playgrounds that have high risk factors and high play value; and

- quadrant 4 - playgrounds that have low risk factors and high play value.

The ultimate aim would be to have all playgrounds in quadrant 4. Many older playgrounds could be classified as being in quadrants 2 or 3; playgrounds which try only to conform to United States Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines and American Society for Testing and Materials standards may very well be in quadrant 1.

The Next Step

This paper, based on the presentation done at the IPA conference in Colorado, has attempted to outline a framework which could be used to integrate the concepts of safety and play value as it relates to playgrounds. What needs to occur now is further work and refinement in the two dimensions - risk factors and play value and the elements found underneath each, in order to produce a working model which can be field tested on our nation's playgrounds. Such a model would help risk managers, park and recreation professionals, child care specialists and school personnel evaluate current playgrounds; allow planners and designers to integrate safety and play value into new appropriate play environments for our children; and provide parents and adults concerned with safe play for their children an understandable way of choosing appropriate equipment. Working together on this project, we can help make America's playgrounds a challenging, yet safe place for our children to experience play.

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Figure 2
Operational Quadrants

Risk Factors	Quad 2 High Risk Low Play Value	Quad 3 High Risk High Play Value
	Quad 1 Low Risk Low Play Value	Quad 4 Low Risk High Play Value
	Play Value	

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Play Among Urban School Children: Outdoor Games at Recess

Olga S. Jarrett and Catherine Young

This article describes research on game playing conducted at three grade levels in a Southern urban elementary school. It is in three parts: (1) an observational study of the playground behavior of six classes (two first grades, two third grades, and two fifth grades) with emphasis on incidence of games with rules, (2) an assignment in which children interviewed their grandparents or other older people in their community to produce a book of old games, and (3) playground observations of a fifth grade class which created a game book and a comparison class to determine whether the book assignment affected recess play.

The school studied serves about 800 students, 85% of whom are African American, the other 15% of whom are white, Asian, or Hispanic. Children from five public housing projects attend the school; 92% of the students receive free or reduced price lunches. Several years ago, school administrators, including the second author, observed the following: (a) teacher concern about problems of low attention span and high levels of hyperactivity, (b) learning style findings that 90% of the poorest readers are predominantly tactile/kinesthetic learners, (c) playground observations suggesting that children engaged in little pretend play or child organized games, and (d) comments by the children that they spent much of their time at home watching television and were rarely involved in home or neighborhood play activities. These observations prompted school administrators to hire a second physical education (PE) teacher to enhance the children's play experiences by spending more time in teaching them sports and games. In addition to having three 45 minute periods of structured PE a week, most of the children have 20 minutes of recess every day. Recess time serves as a break from academic pursuits, and children can use this time for a variety of activities including game playing.

More time for structured PE was considered important, but unstructured recess time was also deemed essential. PE is valuable for its emphasis on exercise and fitness and for teaching children how to play games with rules. Theory and research have linked exercise with brain functioning and cognitive performance (Pellegrini & Smith, 1998;

Healy, 1991). Games with rules have been linked with moral development (Piaget, 1932/1997; DeVries, 1998); respect for rules, self-discipline, and control of aggression (Schaefer & Reid (1986); problem solving, the development of strategies, and the appreciation for one's own and other people's cultures (Nichols, 1995); and the learning of values and attitudes (Freitag, 1998). Children learn skills during PE; they often apply those skills in the social milieu of the playground during recess. According to Jambor (1994, p. 18), "The playground during recess is one of the few places where today's children can actively confront, interpret, and learn from meaningful social experience." During structured play, children must play with one another. In more open-ended play, ability to negotiate is necessary to keep the play going (Trawick-Smith, 1998). While organizing their own games, children learn problem solving and planning strategies, develop social skills involving leadership and followership, resolve conflicts, and develop an understanding of fairness (see Schaefer & Reid, 1986; Nichols, 1995; Grossman, 1995; Jambor, 1994; DeVries, 1998).

Playground Observations

A simple event recording observation system (Jarrett, 1998) was used to study the recess behaviors of two first grade, two third grade, and two fifth grade classes. Using a coding sheet divided into two minute time intervals, the observer watched the children and noted during each two minute period whether there were boys, girls, and boys and girls together engaged in the following behaviors: (a) chasing, (b) rough and tumble play, (c) use of the playground equipment, (d) talking by groups of children, (e) teasing or bullying, (f) fighting, (g) game playing, and (h) solitary behavior. The observer also noted names of children fighting, teasing, or solitary and wrote down the names or brief description of any games being played. In these playground observations, "games" were defined rather loosely as physical play involving structured arrangements between children. Games could have definite rules or could involve informal negotiations. Chasing was not a game if it occurred spontaneously; only if it involved arrangements such as who was chasing whom and which

areas were safe zones. Playing with hula hoops and jump ropes were games if children worked together on turn taking, chanting rhymes, or competing. The play area comprised a playground with a wooden play structure (slide, tires and a net for climbing, bars for swinging and a fireman's pole), a grassy area, exercise bars, and two hard surfaced areas (one with basketball hoops) for games and sports. Before collecting data, we observed together with our graduate assistants until we achieved agreement at least 85% of the time. Each class was observed for five 15-20 minute recess periods during winter and spring.

Since the primary purpose of this paper is to describe game playing, we summarize the other behaviors we saw. The play structure was in almost constant use. Spontaneous chasing occurred frequently at all three grade levels. Although high levels of rough and tumble play occurred among the first and third graders, very little negative behavior was seen. Fighting occurred in only 3% of the first grade time segments, and 6% of the third grade time segments. Teasing or bullying occurred only 3% of the time in third grade with none in first grade. No fighting or teasing/bullying was observed in the fifth grade classes. Children played games in most time intervals. Consistent with Piagetian theory (Piaget, 1932/1997) third and fifth graders played games in more time intervals than did first graders; however first and third graders played a greater variety of games than fifth graders. Table 1 lists the games played at each grade level.

In type of game played, third and fifth graders differed from first graders, in that the older children played more organized ball games with set rules. When younger children played football they generally chased whoever had the ball without obvious evidence of teamwork. The younger children played some common children's games such as tag, hide and seek, and follow the leader, but they also made up games, often influenced by TV. Games like "Jerry Springer," "Power Rangers," and "Kung Fu" involved some organization but were otherwise barely distinguishable from rough and tumble play. Involving more structure, was "All my children," organized by a third grader who said her aunt taught it to her.

This was a "Mother, may I" type game which involved almost all of the girls for an entire recess period.

Table 1

Games Played by Grade Level

First Grade	Third Grade	Fifth Grade
Races	Races	Races
Jump rope	Jump rope	Jump rope
Hula hoop	Kickball	Hula hoop
Rhymes for choosing "it"	Baseball	Kickball
Tug of war	football	Soccer
Follow the leader	basketball	Basketball
Hide and seek	"All my Children"	Hula hoop
Group cartwheels	"Jerry Springer"	Clapping games
Frisbee	Ballie!	Frisbee
Freeze tag	Duck, duck, goose	tag
Tag	Relay races	
"Jerry Springer"	Frisbee	
"Power Rangers"	Tag/capture (prisoner)	
"Kung Fu"	Tag	
Cheer-leading		

Game book assignment

In April, teachers from one first, one third, and one fifth grade class agreed to give an assignment to their classes in which the students would: (a) interview older people in their communities on how they played as children and (b) create a book of games. The idea for such a book came from an elementary school in Germany which produced a book of approximately 50 games and rhymes with drawings and instructions for play (Alte Kinderspiele...1989). An assignment in which children create such a book can have several purposes.

* It gives children skills in gathering historical data. Interviewing and learning from older people in the community makes history come alive for children while teaching data collection skills used in history and anthropology. Such an assignment connects well with social studies (Jorgensen, 1993; Levstik & Barton, 1997).

* Children connect with and take pride in their communities when they learn about their own culture. The Foxfire Books, which evolved from student assignments to interview and learn from older people in the Appalachians, developed appreciation among students as well as the public for the skills and culture of these people including their toys and games (Pace & Smith, 1993). Collections of African American children's games (Hopson, Hopson & Clavin, 1996; Jones & Hawes, 1987) indicate that African American children have a rich play heritage.

* Oral and written communication skills can be developed through learning how to explain the rules of a game well enough that others can understand.

* Learning more games adds to the game playing repertoire of the children, providing more options for playground play.

In the game assignment, the children were told to talk with their older relatives or neighbors and find out how they played as children. They were then to learn a game to teach the class and to include in a class book project. The first grade teacher made the assignment but did not follow through. A few children brought games, but a book was not created. In the third grade, approximately half of the children (9) brought games (after many reminders) and created a small book. The games were: Tag, Racing, ABC Spy, Guess, Candy Girl All My World Look So Sweet, I spy, Black Eye Private Eye, and Pat-Pat.. In the instructions, as illustrated by the following, one can get the "big idea" of the games, but key points are missing in the instructions.

Candy Girl All My World Look So Sweet

1. You need at least three to four people to play.
2. You must pay attention to play.
3. It is a very good game.
4. You get in a circle and when you get in a circle you sing "Candy Girl All My World Look So Sweet."
5. You do a particular dance.
6. Then a person chose a dance.
7. Then the other person chooses a dance.

The fifth grade class accepted the assignment with great enthusiasm after the teacher modeled a shoe passing game she learned from her grandmother. Most of the students (17) taught games to their classmates and contributed to the book, writing playing instructions and illustrating their games with colored drawings. The teacher laminated the children's work and created a class book, Outdoor Games of Old: Illustrations of and rules for games played by our grandparents and their contemporaries, taught to us through interviews. Some of the games were familiar to us: Kick the Can, Red Light/Green Light, Chase, Red Rover, Cat and Mouse, Hide and Seek, Jacks, and Croquet. Other games were more unusual: Red Head Devil and Heart Eater (both circle games with chasing involved), Zoom Skirt (turn right on "zoom" and left on "skirt").

Left Pocket (anyone who calls "left pocket" gets what is in your left pocket), Hot Butter Biscuit (a chasing game with a safe zone), Hit the Pins (try to knock down clothespins with a rolled up sock), and Clapping Hand Game (rhythmic clapping while naming peers without missing a beat).

Two games appeared to be dangerous: Tire Relay and Jumpboard. In Tire Relay, one child gets inside a truck tire; another child pushes the tire and tries to outrun it! The instructions for Jumpboard follow: Jumpboard is a game for 2 people only. Jumpboard has to be like a seesaw and 1 person is on each side. 1 part of the seesaw is on the ground and the other part is in the air. 1 person has to jump on the side with the seesaw part in the air and the other person jumps up in the air. If the person in the air don't land back straight on the board, then that person is out. Then you keep playing and rotating who's going to jump on the board and who's not. There is a 4 ft. long board needed. It may be a dangerous game but its still fun to play! Good luck and stimulate the children to organize a larger variety of games during recess.

The effect of the assignment on third graders could not be assessed because the third graders did not complete their game book until the end of the year. Table 2 indicates the percentage of intervals in which given games were played in the two fifth grade classes.

Table 2

	Percentage of time segments in which children were playing games		
	Boys & Girls	Boys Only	Girls Only
First Grade	28	40	17
Third Grade	62	61	20
Fifth Grade	31	46	75

As observed earlier in the year, children in both classes played games during most of the two minute intervals. Often several games were going on at the same time. Dominant games in both classes were ball games: basketball in one class and kickball and football in the other. However, in the class which had created the game book, some of the children, especially the girls, tried the new games. The game book assignment appears to have added to the game repertoire of the girls especially, giving them experience in teaching, leading, and participating in new games with a variety of rules.

What we have learned

Two things were salient from our initial playground observations: (a) the low incidence of negative behavior and (b) the variety of games which the children played. Two reasons for the low level of fighting and teasing/bullying might be: the quality of supervision by the classroom teacher and the fact that some of the children who often exhibit negative behavior were in "time out" for some prior offense. These children were outside but were required to sit on the steps and watch. The quality of supervision was affected by the policy that classroom teachers supervise their own classes during recess. The teachers usually stood at the edge of the play area, but some participated with the children in ball games or in activities like jump rope. They allowed rough and tumble play but intervened quickly if they saw something dangerous occurring. Another reason for the low rate of negative behavior may be that the children, through a combination of PE instruction and recess application, had worked out ways to resolve conflicts peacefully. Skills in equitably choosing teams, using rhymes to decide who is "it," and arguing rather than fighting over issues of fairness provide children with tools for avoiding violence.

We believe that PE plus recess form a powerful combination, with recess as a time in which children can organize for themselves the games they learned during PE. The amount of game playing and the types of games played suggest that the PE program influenced the games which the children organized during recess. However, we cannot say this definitively since we did not collect data before and after adding more PE to the program. We recommend that innovations be planned so that they can be properly evaluated.

In retrospect, the game book assignment was probably not developmentally appropriate for first grade, even though the children could have dictated the rules to the teacher. Appropriateness for third grade is questionable. This assignment is probably most appropriate for students in fifth grade and older, who, according to Piaget (1932/1997), are entering the stage when rules are "codified." The understanding that game rules exist within historical and cultural contexts may be necessary before the assignment to collect old games is meaningful to the children. The understanding that rules can be modified was shown by the boy who

brought in the Tire Relay game. When we pointed out that the game sounded dangerous, he thoughtfully noted that maybe the rules could be changed to make it more safe: a child could try to outrun an empty rolling tire.

The game book appeared to be a good writing assignment. The children wrote with little prompting. However, the instructions by some of the children, even the fifth graders, were not clear enough to follow. We recommend that this assignment be introduced earlier in the school year so the children can spend more time editing their work for spelling, grammar, and general clarity, and so they can add more games as they learn them. Children could form "editorial boards" who would read the instructions and suggest ways to make them more clear. The effect of a game book assignment on the quality of writing and the motivation to write should be evaluated. Playground observations at the end of the year showed that girls played games they learned from the game book assignment, increasing their repertoire of games that did not require equipment and could easily be played in their neighborhoods. Further research could have included interviews on whether children continued to play these games and whether they taught them to others.

Many types of recess activities are beneficial. Chasing and play on playground equipment provide good exercise. Time to chat with friends affords children valuable opportunities to communicate, socialize, and simply take a "break" from their studies. Within reasonable limits, recess should be a time when children do what they wish. However, knowledge of a variety of games (with and without equipment) and the opportunity to organize their own games during recess provides additional play options. Playing games may have implications for problem solving, social skill development, and moral development. We were encouraged by the amount of game playing observed and the effect of the game book on the variety of games played.

In case the reader has been wondering, Tire Relay and Jumpboard were not played during recess! We assume that this was due to the fortunate lack of a truck tire and a four foot board, which suggests an area for further research: the effect of equipment availability and variety on children's play during recess...

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Motivation and Movement: A Cognitive/Physical Program for Young Children

Carolyn Langley

"...the truth is, not only does movement stimulate learning physiologically, but it also helps young children to experience concepts so they can process them cognitively. Teachers must offer children opportunities to solve movement problems, invent their own solutions to challenges, and make abstract concepts concrete by physically experiencing them. This is the key to learning for young children (Pica, 1997, p.10)."

The Motivation and Movement Classroom

Motivation and Movement is a developmentally appropriate outdoor and indoor education program designed for kindergarten and first-grade children that provides opportunities for developing cognitive and social skills through physical activity, music and movement. To promote this program a Motivation and Movement (M & M) Outdoor Classroom was created. After preliminary welding and large equipment construction, 63 preschool fifth-grade children, parents, foster parents, grandparents, teachers (and spouses), one principal, partners in education and community friends came together to build the outdoor classroom in two days.

The M & M Outdoor Classroom has over 20 structures including pipe structures for gross motor development, wood and tire structures that teach colors and color word recognition, positions words and concepts, counting by two's, color patterns, an addition tire tree and a subtraction tire tree to teach number recognition and a keyboard alphabet painted on the sidewalk. The largest structure located in the M&M Outdoor Classroom is a 16'x24' Sun Shelter with 4 Learning Stations. It has a Puppet Theater, a Pretend Store, a double-sided Plexiglas Art Easel, and a double-sided Mirror. This structure provides opportunities for creative exploration, language, math, art and social development, as well as circle activities, in a shaded area. To satisfy safety concerns inservice seminars are given to teachers on how to introduce the structures to the children and promote physical, cognitive, social and emotional development. The play area was secured with a fence, and a pine bark mulch ground-cover base was placed under all structures to reduce the

likelihood of serious fall injury.

The Indoor M & M Centers provide activities for large and fine motor development that also teach letter, number and social skills. These centers include a sand table, exercise bike (shape, color, number), hopscotch, play dough, manipulatives (puppets, games, small blocks, bears), large foam, wood blocks, Lego table, a small group teacher-directed center ("Letter of the Week," shape and color), Bean Bag Toss. Letter, number and social concepts are integrated into other learning activities, as well. Additionally, young children learn and exercise through whole-group activities. Such activities include interactive videos, music, cooperative games and technology (whole group movement documented in classroom publishing through technology). The M & M program is designed, implemented and documented through years of research.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices and Creative Exploration

According to David Elkind (Rasmussen, 1998), professor of child study at Tufts University, children learn about colors, weights and unit concepts through experience and touching, which often happens when they play. Sue Bredekamp, Director of Professional Development at the National Association for the Education of Young Children, says "Play helps young children learn social skills, promotes their emotional development, and allows them to exercise their creativity. Play can give children a chance to understand symbols by learning that words can stand for things (Rasmussen, 1998, p.2)." JoAnn Barney, director of the Flagstone Child Development Center, explains that play is academic (Mann, 1998). The role of teachers is to provide learning opportunities through play. The Sun Shelter stations, puppet theater and pretend store provide many props to the children in order to facilitate these creative learning opportunities.

Social/Emotional Development

Rae Pica (1997) reminds us that social development is a process that begins with self-discovery and results in the ability to interact with others. Early childhood experiences are an important part of this development. When children have opportunities

to work together toward a common goal (cooperative games, creating a shape, etc.), they know they have each contributed to the success of the venture. Cooperation promotes pro social behaviors.

Linda Duerr, coordinator of the Child Development Laboratory at Penn State, notes that our first goal is to teach children to get along with each other because they cannot learn otherwise (Rasmussen, 1998). Cooperative games and partner activities promote social skill development and build self-esteem. One example comes to mind: as a child walks on the multi-colored balance beam, a peer tutor extends a helping hand for cognitive, moral and physical support, while they name the color of each beam. Together, the pair of children learns colors, balance and how to help one another.

Learning Styles and Cognitive/Physical Development

Silver, Strong and Perini (1997) state "Learning styles are not fixed throughout life, but develop as a person learns and grows (p.24)." The 1927 theory of Carl Jung tells us learning-style models "... recognize the role of cognitive and affective processes in learning and, therefore, can significantly deepen our insights into issues related to motivation (Silver, Strong, & Perini, 1997, p.22)." In the Motivation and Movement program, the plan is to focus on bodily kinesthetic learning. Children learn cognitive skills through physical activity. Example: Crawl "through" the tire, climb "on" the tire, climb "over" the tire. Through these activities, young children learn position words.

Classroom Publishing and Large Group Activity

Children love to see themselves on camera and in photos. This is a great motivational activity for creative writing. Using a Power Mac computer, large group movement is recorded on the Quick Cam, then the students dictate their movement as the teacher records their story. It is child-created and they are motivated to read and share the story. Example: The children watch the monitor as the teacher snaps a photo of them doing "jumping jacks." They view the photo on the monitor and dictate: "We can

jump. We can jump high." Then, the photo and story is published, shared and displayed in the classroom.

Summary

Research findings indicate young children learn through visual, auditory, kinesthetic, music and movement activities. The Motivation and Movement program successfully addresses these areas by implementing cognitive, physical and social strategies through developmentally appropriate practices including movement, creative exploration, classroom publishing and large group planning. It is imperative that educators provide opportunities for students to achieve success in learning. The Motivation and Movement outdoor classroom and indoor centers are good learning environments for young children to achieve these successful experiences.

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Silly-cise: Movement and Humor with a Purpose

Scott Liebler

Children are natural born learners - 100% potential intelligence and creativity! That is if the atmosphere is right and their natural energies are allowed to circulate freely throughout their entire body and mind. However stress and tension brought on by anger, fear, frustration and anxiety can block this circulation and hinder a child's natural abilities to learn and enjoy themselves.

This article will introduce you to Silly-cise, a unique blending of movement, humor, vocal thinking and sensory integration activities designed to help children release stress and tension so that blood, energy and nutrients can circulate and nurture the entire body and mind. These activities provide a more integrated approach to learning while encouraging children to Look, Sound, Move and Think like happy people.

Look Happy

You know the best way to look happy is to SMILE. When you smile you relax the face muscles which allows more blood to flow into the brain. When the brain gets more blood it also gets more oxygen, and your brain loves oxygen! It makes you happy, smarter, more alert and much more attractive. Grinmastics activities are guaranteed to help you smile no matter how you feel. For instance there's Face Dancing. Just play some music and make as many faces as you can in 20 seconds. Or how about Face Push Ups? Bring your hand up across your face, over your head and smile. Then bring it down and frown. Keep repeating until you can't quit smiling. There's also the Frown Eraser, but only do this in an extreme emergency. Put your hands in the air, shake your head and hum. Look up in the air and howl. Then tap on the back of your head and chest and say mi-mi-mi-mi-mi-mi. Bet you can't do these and not smile!

Sound Happy

Did you ever notice how easy it is to sing when you're happy and in a good mood? Well scientists have proven that singing helps to elevate your mood. Singing, humming, howling, and laughing help to oxygenate and stimulate the cells, tissues and organs, as well as to relax the muscles of the chest, throat and abdominal areas. This makes everything work better and makes you feel better.

Some people don't sing, because they don't know the words or the melodies. Which is why Silly-cise introduces silly songs to help people sound like they're happy. All you have to do is sing sounds like dum, ding, beep etc. Or, you can just hum along to a song, or make up your own. Scat singing is wonderful and so is singing like different animals. For instance try singing Twinkle Twinkle Little Star like different dogs.

One of the best ways to sound like you're happy is to laugh. That's why it's the best medicine. Try some Chuckle Jamming by laughing to a song like Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. It doesn't matter whether you're laughing for real or just faking; your body will have the same effect. After some of these activities were introduced in a special needs classroom, a teacher explained that one of her nonverbal children began to speak and share a highly developed sense of humor. The little girl now sings frequently, making verbal sounds with pitch more than ever before.

Move Happy

Movement gives us the feeling of being alive and provides the means by which we participate in life. The repetition, repetition, repetition of movement patterns builds strength, balance, endurance, and coordination. And children will learn the majority of their fundamental motor skills between the ages of 2 and 10, the skills they will have to carry throughout life. Developing efficient motor skills during childhood builds positive self-image by helping to eliminate the potential embarrassment and self-consciousness when it comes to participating in physical activities. Have you ever noticed how some children have trouble interacting with other children when they have inferior motor skills?

Movement is also proven to be one of the most effective ways to manage stress, maintain emotional stability and enhance learning abilities. In response to stressful thoughts and feelings of anger, fear, frustration, guilt and anxiety, the brain sends messages through the nervous system to command certain muscles to contract, or shorten. We human beings come equipped with two basic neuro-muscular reactions to stress. Whenever we're afraid, the muscles

in the front of the body contract. Have you ever experienced butterflies in your belly, or noticed the rounded shoulders of a child in fear? In addition to the fear responses we also have the anger or assertive response when the muscles in the back of the body contract. Have you ever noticed how stiff a child gets when they throw a temper tantrum?

What's important to understand about these near-muscle reactions to stress is that even though the brain will contract these muscles during stressful situations, it doesn't necessarily release the contractions when the stress is resolved. Excessive, habitual stressful situations can leave certain muscles in a constant state of contraction, thereby slowing down reaction time, altering the posture, numbing sensations, and expending energy that prevents the brain from working at full power.

Movement helps release these muscular contractions so blood, energy and nutrients can circulate freely throughout the entire body and mind, especially purposeful movement patterns that direct children to move every part of their body. Releasing muscular contractions puts the brain in a more relaxed state to perceive and receive sensations.

Here are a variety of Silly-cise warm up activities that allow children to engage in whole body movement patterns. All you need is some music and enough space for each child to move without touching anything or anyone.

- Crazy Conducting - conduct music with different parts of the body.
- Painter's Dance - pretend to paint shapes and pictures with different parts of the body.
- Silly-cise Stomp - clap different body parts while walking in place or jumping.
- Circle Dance - make circles with different parts of the body.
- Fine Musicians - pretend to play different musical instruments a variety of ways.
- Body Sculpting - form different letters, shapes or numbers with the body.
- Ding Dong Song - move different parts of the body like the inside of a bell and sing ding dong.
- See-Saw Song - move different parts of the body like a see-saw and sing see-saw.
- Wacky Walking - walk around the room

with different body parts.

- Wacky Waving- wave to each other with different body parts.
- Adventurobics - pretend to take trips to the jungle, ocean, circus, mountains, etc.

Think Happy

All the thoughts we think are thought about in the conscious mind. The thoughts we think over and over again sink into the subconscious mind and develop our attitudes. Imagine if every young child were trained to think positive and feel confident. For instance you could have children say "I like myself!" several times a day. And you could say "I like myself" to them several times a day.

You could encourage children to take Reality Checks when they make mistakes, so they can learn that mistakes are a necessary part of learning and nothing to be ashamed of. Just tap on the shoulders and say "I'm all right, I'm all right." Then tap on your head and say "I ain't perfect." Then tap on the shoulders and say "But I can do my best." That my friends is reality and what we can reasonably expect from children. Finally you could take a Gratitude Check by reaching in the air and saying "Thanks for the sunshine." Then bend down and say "Thanks for the ground." Keep going up and down until you run out of things to be grateful for.

Conclusion

As you can probably see, there is no right or wrong way to perform these activities, so don't ever criticize your children when they're doing Silly-cise. Let them feel free to experience and discover how they look, sing, move, and think. The original meaning of the word "silly" is to be blessed and content with your self. Children seem to know this intuitively. Being silly is how they express their personalities, creativity and joyfulness. It also gives parents and teachers a wonderful opportunity to observe and discover their children's passions and talents. Have you ever noticed how happy and content children are when they're being silly?

These activities help children release negative emotions and give them creative outlets to stimulate their perceptiveness, maintain their alertness, and make learning a more pleasurable experience. The more we provide children with a variety of activities in which they perceive through their senses and realize that learning is fun, the more they will want to remain committed to lifelong learning.

Scott Liebler is a self proclaimed Certified Funsicologist and creator of Silly-cise. He has written training manuals and produced audio and video tapes to share these activities with early childhood educators, parents and their children. For more information on his workshops or curriculum materials, call 800-530-3675 or write to FunFit, PO Box 3729, Dillon, CO 80435.

Physical Activity for Preschoolers

Rae Pica

Why consider physical activity for young children? Is it not true that preschoolers naturally get all the activity they need just by being children? After all, how often do the words "I wish they would just sit still!" or "These kids are bouncing off the walls!" come to mind? Certainly, it seems as if preschoolers are active enough.

There is much debate on just this topic. Some experts feel that up to age 7 or 8, just being a kid provides exertion enough. Others, however, cite the fact that children 2 to 5 years of age spend an average of 25 hours a week watching television as evidence "being a kid" is not what it used to be. And, that statistic does not include any time spent playing video games or working with computers. Also, decreasing amounts of time and space in children's lives have become factors in their "couch potatoism," with some studies showing up to 50 percent of American children not getting enough exercise (Taras, 1992). Research also indicates:

- Forty percent of 5- to 8-year-olds show at least one heart disease risk factor, including elevated cholesterol, high blood pressure, and obesity (Berenson, 1980; Ross et al., 1987). In the past, such risk factors were rarely seen in anyone under the age of 30.
- Studies by the Institute for Aerobic Research (1987) indicate the first signs of arteriosclerosis are appearing at about age 5.
- The number of overweight children has doubled in the past. Obesity, of course, can lead to heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure. It increases stress on weight-bearing joints, lowers self-esteem, and affects relationships with peers. Obesity is greater among children and adolescents who watch TV.
- Obese children tend to become obese adults, and children with high blood pressure are likely to become adults with high blood pressure.
- Sedentary habits among adults are a major health problem in the United States, with an estimated 250,000 deaths a year due to low levels of activity and fitness! One study determined only 20 percent of adults who were inactive as children became active as adults (Activity and Health Research, 1992).

Yes, the figures are frightening. But,

since scare tactics may not be the best means of motivation, here is the good news:

- Children who are physically active and experience success in movement show higher levels of self-esteem and a greater sense of accomplishment.
- Physical activity helps children get through the day without fatigue and makes them more alert.
- Fit children are more likely to participate in sports, dance, games, and other physical activities (like rollerblading, swimming, and hiking) that improve muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, cardiorespiratory endurance, and body composition (the ratio of fat to muscle).

Although there is little research suggesting childhood physical activity significantly impacts childhood health, it is believed individuals who are physically active as children are likely to remain physically active in adulthood. So physical activity in childhood may indeed have an impact on adult health. The key in early childhood is enjoyment. For an adult, success might be defined in terms of an extra lap run, an extra ten pounds lifted, or getting through an extra 15 minutes of aerobics. For a preschooler, success in any physical activity is simply a matter of how much fun it is! Pangrazi and Corbin (1993) report that most children are involved in low-intensity, high-volume (long duration) activity each day and "this naturally occurring activity is consistent with developmental levels of children" (p. 17). Therefore, teachers, caregivers, and parents need not be concerned with the type or intensity of the activity, as long as regular activity remains a part of the child's life.

The Physical Best program, developed by the American Alliance for Health, Physical Fitness, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD, 1989), defines physical fitness as "a physical state of well-being that allows people to (1) perform daily activities with vigor, (2) reduce their risk of health problems related to lack of exercise, and (3) establish a fitness base for participation in a variety of physical activities." If this definition is to become a lifelong reality, physical activity should be as much a daily habit as brushing teeth! Teachers, caregivers, and parents must encourage, praise, and validate physical activity at every opportunity and serve as

role models to the children in their care. Because Americans now burn fewer calories in the course of their daily lives, physical activity must be planned into each day.

Yes, the competition with television, video games, and computers is steep, but children will never be as motivated to be physically active as they are during the early years. The fact is, children love to move! So parents and early childhood professionals are not without weapons in their war against sedentary lifestyles.

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Part Five: Play and Advocacy

Introduction

Although it has been ten years since the UN Convention of Children's Rights was signed, and subsequently ratified by most countries of the world, the United States is one of two (the other being Somalia) that has not ratified it. As we move into the 21st century, it may be useful to assess where we are and by what means we could ensure that Article 31 of the convention becomes a reality: that all children have a right to play and to participate fully in the cultural life of their countries. Parents, schools, and communities should set safe play environments as a top priority and work together to provide places and opportunities for children to develop to their fullest potential physically, mentally, and aesthetically. In this section, we look at some new and exciting venues for bringing the child's right to play to the forefront of the continuing fight for the safety and well being of our children.

Clements discusses the concept of a playworker—a person who guides children throughout their playwork. The idea of a playworker, as a profession, is just emerging in the USA and needs moral and financial support from the public to make it a reality. One excellent way to bring attention to children is to organize a community PlayDay. *Guddemi* and *O'Bar* offer concrete suggestions on how to plan, organize, and implement this wonderful event. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, specifically Article 31, is looked at in depth by *Guddemi, Jambor, and Moore*. This article includes information on the status of play in the USA today and presents a plan of action for the ratification of the Convention and other play policies by the United States.

Sharapan gives us a closer glimpse of the popular Mr. Rogers, of Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood. His early years were filled with creative play and in his television program he tries to send the message that adults should encourage creative play in children. A hot issue currently is the abolition of recess in some parts of the country. *Tyler* offers a former principal's perspective on the importance of retaining recess in the schools and stresses how important it is to children's development that adults value not only their work, but also their play.

Not all children of the world are lucky enough to enjoy safe play environments. Finally, *Shire* describes the land mine situation in Kurdistan/Northern Iraq and dangers that young children face just by stepping outside. More than ever it is important for all of us to become active advocates for children's right to play.

The Emergence of Playworkers in the USA

Rhonda Clements

As we move into the millennium, we can predict great strides in technological achievements, advances in medicine, increased global communications, and electronics. We can also expect the emergence of new professions, as the need for advanced training increases to meet the new technological challenges. Beyond this onslaught of increased megabytes and websites, we are less likely to foresee a need for "nonformal" careers and work endeavors, even though our future society will still be very dependent on the human element to maintain its' prosperity, pleasure, and their peace as we know it.

One example of a nonformal career that places importance on "living life" as opposed to only being a part of life in the millennium, is the role of a "playworker." Playwork is a term used for the field of nonformal education where "play" is the main focus of activity (Moore & Cosco, 1998). Playworkers strive to provide opportunities for the young child to play. These play opportunities awaken the young child's imagination, increase their opportunities to interact with parents, siblings, and peers in playful ways, and increase their physical activity levels. Most importantly, they foster the young child's love for play for its own sake. The emphasis on "play for its own sake" is less valued and seldom discussed within the USA. The concept has acquired greater importance in Ireland, Scotland, Germany, Australia, Denmark, and England, these countries that have placed value on play opportunities as being an essential component of childhood. Because of the lack of understanding in the USA, greater appreciation, communication and funding for specific training is needed before playwork can be accepted as a nonformal profession in the USA.

The Need For Playwork

First, the emphasis on play for its own sake should not be confused with the value of play that is currently given within institutes of higher learning located in the USA. Educational theorists and contemporary scholars have come to realize that play is the primary means by which the young child learns and develops. It is also the means by which young children increase their understanding of the environment. Under this

umbrella, play is a medium by which the young child acquires knowledge, and increases his or her language ability among other purposeful educational objectives. Over time, parents and school officials have acquired an appreciation for play when it is discussed in terms of achieving academic goals, and have shown their support by funding programs that offer teachers a variety of developmentally appropriate learning and play materials to be utilized within preschools and elementary schools. Little or no attention has been given to play as a means for children and adults to reach a happy, fulfilled life. In essence, one of our greatest goals for the millennium must be for all children and adults to "live life" and not just be alive.

It is with this goal that the American Association For The Child's Right to Play (IPA/USA) embarked on its first IPA/USA Playworker Institute during the Summer, 1998. Using general resources from colleagues working as playworkers in countries that have had a long history of Playwork, the intent of the institute was to offer a two day training session to a small number of interested individuals from varying backgrounds. Ten highly qualified play experts with expertise in early childhood development, playground construction, adventure playgrounds, landscape architecture, physical play, and play theories, met to carefully plan objectives and activities that would introduce the participants to playwork and the general responsibilities of a playworker. All training personnel were active participants in the institute's activities, and did not separate themselves from the participants unlike most training or certification endeavors conducted today. The first time event was critical to helping the Association identify those primary areas that could become part of the foundation for future institutes with the ultimate goal of identifying the playworker as a new nonformal profession within the USA.

The following information discusses some of the characteristics conveyed at that first institute, and offers additional characteristics reflective of the overall philosophy common to the playwork profession in European countries. It also summarizes the nature of the playworker's role as derived

from the participant's written evaluations and the information acquired from a review of the written recordings taken during the two day event. In addition, it includes information reflecting the need for training in safety which is common to the European playwork philosophy, but was discussed less at the institute due to time restraints. Overall, it is intended to expand upon the limited information concerning playwork in the USA that currently exists.

Basic Characteristics of the Playworker

The role of the Playworker can differ greatly depending on the facility in which one is employed. Playwork involves working directly with children of all age levels in nonformal settings, indoors and outdoors. The most common settings include parks and playgrounds, play gardens, family entertainment centers, after school centers, children's museums, children's hospitals, toy libraries, family entertainment settings, and zoos (Moore and Cosco, 1998). Basically every place that children can play, including an airport, can employ the use of a playworker. The overall focus is to bring play into the lives of all young children living in urban or rural communities where it can flourish.

A defining characteristic of the playworker is the individual's understanding and appreciation of play. This understanding comes from having experienced a large variety of playful activities aimed at rekindling one's imagination, creativity, and exploration into new or time memorial pastimes during training sessions. It is this understanding and newly developed attitude towards the importance of play that captures the nonprofessional's interest and desire to become a playworker. The greatest majority of the training activities utilize inexpensive materials, group problem solving, and discussions concerning the need for play within the community. All individual solutions are accepted and applied towards the greater goal of playing with children.

A second characteristic of the playworker is their reflection and understanding of childhood. This informal understanding of the different abilities common to specific age levels may stem from having previously worked with children in educational set-

tings, or may come from the knowledge of being a parent or grandparent. Regardless, this basic awareness of childhood behaviors helps to create a play environment where all age levels can play freely and without inhibitions. In fact, it is the goal of all playworkers to create a bond with every child or group of children entrusted to their play session. As a first step, each playworker endeavors to respond lovingly and patiently to the child's desires and wishes during each play session. They realize that giving the child a choice of play activity is paramount to maintaining interest and ultimately to having a fulfilling experience. Hence, playworkers are keen observers of children at play, and they look for the child's reactions to the activity to determine the degree of interest. They are also keenly aware that different ages have different play preferences.

Playing With Infants

Playworkers realize that infants are attuned to nonverbal messages that the adult sends. They also know that infants need physical closeness to feel secure. Therefore, they follow the child's cues and play with the child when he or she is motivated to participate. They know that infants should be removed from their cribs when not sleeping, and they provide items to grasp such as textured balls and musical toys during the intervals they are awake. They also provide opportunities for infants to move freely on a clean floor or rug in front of unbreakable mirrors and create cozy environments conducive for play experiences. The play experiences often focus on imitative activities.

Playing with Toddlers

Playworkers are continually responsive to the toddler's boundless energy, and need to move and explore the environment. They also recognize that toddlers tend to communicate their desires in ways other than verbal communication. Hence, the playworker is prepared to alternate high energy physical play challenges with slower more quiet play experiences. They respond to the child's facial expressions and body movements, fanciful gestures, and occasional tears during the play session, and allow the child to maintain contact by sitting the child in their lap, or by grasping the child's hand. Overall, they help the child approach each new play challenge in an imaginative way and ensure that the child has ample materials or equipment to maintain a self-contained play experience without interruption.

Playing with Preschool Age Children

Playworkers make use of their previous experiences with preschool children, and have acquired a basic understanding of the three and four year old child's intellectual, social, and physical abilities. They are aware of the child's play preferences, and of the function that physical and fantasy play has in the child's life. They can model a simple physical skill for the child to imitate such as a hop or jump, and they can initiate small group cooperative activities for increased socialization. Most important, they know when to modify the equipment or activity for less skilled children and strive for all children to find adventure and success in unstructured play sessions. Overall, the playworker secures resources for the child's play fantasies and is mindful of the props and materials that would best extend the child's involvement.

Playing with Elementary School Age Children

The playworker can serve a variety of roles in the elementary school age child's life. He or she can be a facilitator of simple games and cooperative play activities, a model for the child to duplicate when first trying new basic physical skills, or a friend to assist one or more children in handling friendly disputes. It is important to remember that while all elementary school age children have an urge to play, not all are familiar with the rules, equipment, or skills needed to play some vigorous games. In all cases the playworker refrains from intervening in the child's play unless directly urged to do so by the children, since playworkers are well aware that today's children are heavily exposed to adult-controlled events, like youth sports, that tend to discourage self-expression, creativity, and a playful experience. Whenever possible, the play experience should be under the control of the child from beginning to end.

An Awareness of Safety

Nonthreatening injuries are inherent to every child's first attempts to rollover, sit-up, crawl, climb, walk, and move in more complex ways. Because of their experience with children, playworkers are often able to predict these normal occurrences and provide a safe environment where all children feel secure to try new physical play challenges. Greater safety considerations are required of the playworker when the scheduled session takes place outdoors, or when the child is

encouraged to freely explore the outdoor environment and all of its elements. Infants must be protected from harsh weather including the sun and cold and many forms of natural playing surfaces. Toddlers often desire physical play challenges involving climbing that are beyond their current stage of development. Preschool children display a natural thirst for adventure that could increase their risk of injury, and elementary school age children sometimes play games with inherent risks or explore moving on different pieces of playground apparatus that can pose possible injury. In all situations, trained playworkers are more likely to foresee possible dangers and are better able to provide immediate intervention if needed. Previous training in basic first aid and playground safety is highly desirable, and will undoubtedly become a qualification of future playworkers in the USA.

An Awareness of Management and Organizational Skills

One of the great dilemmas for untrained professionals is the inability to manage and organize small groups of children for physical play experiences. The wide spread occurrence of parents hiring experienced individuals to conduct birthday party games reflect this need. Playworkers trained in basic management and organizational skills increase the likelihood that every large group play session will be adequately structured in a calm and comforting way. This factor is important since children of all age groups can sense an adult's uneasiness, and a stressful environment can create chaos and limit the child's desire to participate.

Playworkers also use basic management and organizational skills when implementing transitions between play activities, when dealing with issues reflecting cooperation and sharing, and when deciding when to abandon the session's initial activity for what seems best at the moment for the infant or toddler. They realize that implementing group management skills with preschool and elementary school aged children does not mean imposing a set of rules and regulations. It does mean, among others, knowing when to set appropriate limits and when to be sensitive to the child's initiative (Moore and Cosco, 1998). The ability to be flexible and use simple game formations when working with groups of older children also increases play participation.

The Ability to Select Play Activities

Playworkers should possess a wide range of play resources containing a variety of different vigorous and nonvigorous play experiences. This factor is essential when choosing the most appropriate play content. Sample factors to be considered include: (a) the age appropriateness of the activity, (b) the extent to which the game or activity matches the child's cognitive, social, and physical activity level, (c) the natural appeal that the activity has for the child, (d) the equipment and material requirements, (e) space requirements, and (f) ease of implementation.

Trained Playworkers also use a variety of strategies to implement the activity, as well as a variety of low or inexpensive equipment for the child to manipulate or create objects with during the play session. For example, knowing how sheets of newspaper and cardboard boxes can be transformed into a make-believe castle or a spaceship is a large part of the playworker's training. Since much of their responsibilities will include working in disadvantaged or low economic settings, the playworker must learn to depend on limited materials and equipment, unlike the recreational specialist that acquires materials through city funding. However, acquiring an awareness of how homemade or natural materials can be used in play sessions can be very satisfying for the individual who is undergoing training. This training also assists the individual in modifying or expanding future play sessions.

Who Should Become A Playworker?

Nonformal professions have the distinction of enlisting a diverse population of adults from a large sector of the community. Currently, playworkers from Europe usually have a background which involves some contact with children, whether in preschool playgroups, in schools having learning support assistants or lunchtime supervisors, or have previous exposure to children through church related functions. They have received basic training in playwork, and are often paid minimum wage or small salaries to perform their duties and responsibilities. They may be scheduled during an early morning session from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. or during an after school session from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. In some parts of England or Scotland, the playworker may assume a larger role that includes managing a group of playworkers and conducting the opera-

tions of large play facilities. Still other countries depend heavily on volunteers from the local community.

One goal of the IPA/USA Playworker movement is to secure funding for continued training to enlist adolescent teens seeking employment for schooling and general spending. This group has been sorely overlooked in our current society, and the opportunities for teenage adults to serve as caring role models and playworkers would be a great addition to communities experiencing a rise in teenage violence. There is also hope that unemployed parents and retired citizens will be able to join the future playworker movement. Finally, it is the belief of the American Association For The Child's Right To Play that "play for its own sake" must be protected and preserved as we move into an era of great change and technological expansion. To limit or stifle the child's right or ability to play may have harmful or negative effects upon the child and can impoverish the community as a whole, as future generations of adults do not know how to use their leisure time, or have not acquired an appreciation for their local community's recreational facilities. Training and utilizing playworkers in the USA is one way in which play can be promoted and ultimately become part of each child's daily life.

Frequently Asked Questions

Finally, the following includes five frequently asked questions concerning playwork for those individuals who are interested in obtaining a basic understanding of the Playworker's role.

1. What does the non-professional need to know in order to perform the essential components of playwork?

At the very least, individuals should acquire an understanding and appreciation of play for its own sake. Individuals should also acquire general knowledge related to the characteristics of children from infancy through age twelve.

2. What kind of person is effective in becoming a playworker?

The individual must respect the young child's urge to play and natural play preferences. They must be willing to establish a bond with each child.

3. What must I know about safety before planning play sessions that involve vigorous physical play or playground exploration?

Training in basic first aid is very desir-

able. This knowledge will help prevent potential injuries and increase the likelihood that an injured child is properly treated.

4. How important is it to have management and organizational skills since most play sessions only involve eight to ten children?

In most small group play sessions, the playworker depends on the child's own initiative and does not interfere with their play. When working with large groups, it is essential that the playworker create a stress free environment that does not inhibit the young child's participation. Utilizing basic management and organizational techniques can alleviate problems caused by the child's inability to follow complex directions, while maintaining a positive play atmosphere.

5. Are there resources available in helping the playworker to select and offer a variety of play experiences?

England's National Play Information Centre (NPIC) is the world's largest reference library of materials on child's play. Located in London, the library currently contains more than 11,000 items on all aspects of play. In addition, in the last ten years a great number of teacher resources have been published in the USA that can assist the playworker in offering young children a variety of play experiences. The greatest majority of these resources emphasize games, planning appropriate play environments, and nonvigorous activities that would interest different age levels. Training sessions can expand the playworker's understanding of how to use recycled or inexpensive materials for the child's use.

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A Community PlayDay for a Changing Society

Marcy Guddemi and Ann O'Bar

What is a PlayDay? A PlayDay is a day for the community to gather together, kick-back, and have some old-fashioned fun playing. It is designed to draw attention to the importance of play and to totally involve families in a wide range of diverse play activities. With the changing society valuing less and less the play of children, a PlayDay can put the P L A Y back into the lives of children and family.

A PlayDay is an event that can encompass everything from a massive park event for thousands of children and adults to small picnics for little ones. It is an opportunity for children, schools, day cares, individuals, families, and communities to share in physical and mental challenges without the pressure of winning or losing "the game." The point of a PlayDay is to play for the sake of playing, to challenge each individual, and to share in the joy of discovery and doing. Most important, however, it is a day for meaningful interactions among children and adults. Favorite PlayDay events include sand play, water play, construction with cardboard boxes and tape, parachute games, pantomime, rope games, hook-tag, visits from traveling zoos, fantasy play, and music play.

Adults and many children have had the simple pleasures of play taken away by competition and team sports. A PlayDay offers a chance to go back to the times when one played just to play. A PlayDay provides opportunities to exercise the mind as well as the body. Games and activities challenge everyone to use their imagination to come up with new ways to play each game. Even though some games and activities have rules, the rules are made to be altered for the benefit of each game and group that is playing. A PlayDay offers games and activities for toddlers to grandparents, and all ages in between. Some games can be played by all ages, while specific age groups should only play others. Play is the ultimate goal of a PlayDay. It requires little more than an imagination, and can continue until everyone is too tired to move. Each play event is successful in its own way.

PlayDays can take on many dimensions and shapes, which may be determined by the other events, which may be planned in conjunction with it. If the day is planned

totally around the PlayDay, a theme can be selected and a schedule can be followed. Different size groups can be more easily kept together. But if the PlayDay is part of a larger event such as a Kidsfest, Art Fair, Oktoberfest, Springfest, or other community event, the games and activities will vary with the flow of the crowd and the specific mix of people. It is important to keep this in mind when planning the games and activities and the number of playleaders, volunteers, or referees that you will need.

Planning the PlayDay

Utilizing as many community resources as possible helps make the PlayDay more fun and also ensures participation from a larger group of people. The following are some of the groups that can be called upon to help plan and organize or simply to cosponsor:

- Schools, Childcare Centers, Teachers
- PTA's (National or Local)
- Senior Citizen Centers
- Public Officials
- Corporations, Businesses
- Media, Newspapers, magazines, TV, Radio
- Scouts, Community organizations
- Universities, Colleges, Students, Faculty
- Libraries and Museums
- Cities, Regions, Localities
- Recreation Centers
- Design Agencies
- City Planners
- Designers

These people can organize and lead the following activities:

- Games/Tournaments
- Play Leadership Workshops
- Playground/Schoolyard Safety Evaluation Event
- Playground Building Seminars/Workshops
- Awards for Excellence in Play or Design
- Articles in Newspapers, Reports on TV/Radio
- Initiation/Completion of Play Projects
- Conference about Play
- Presidential, Mayoral, Gubernatorial Proclamations/Declarations
- Contests, e.g., Ball Bouncing, Hula Hoops, other benefits
- Bumper Stickers

General Considerations for Planning

The first decision that must be made is where and when to hold the PlayDay. The site can be inside as well as outside. The site also determines the appropriateness of certain games due to the surface material. Games played on grass can be much more physical and challenging than games played on asphalt or on a gymnasium floor. At the same time, games played indoors can be oriented toward bouncing and skill activities. It is important that the games are appropriate for the flooring surface(s) available. An outdoor site should have protection from the sun and in case of inclement weather, the elements. If at all possible, an indoor site should have some soft surface for little people or to accommodate physical games played by others. All sites should have adequate access for the handicapped and the elderly.

The second major decision is planning what will happen during the playday. It is best to plan games and play activities with age groups in mind. Divide the activities into Little People, Middle People, and Big People. Little People are toddlers up to 5 or 6. Middle People are from 6 to 12 or so. Big people are 13 to adult. The divisions are more for motor and physical development than anything else. It is very easy for a teenage boy or girl to run down a five year old! Of course the size divisions are also for different types of play. Toddlers are more interested in solo play and one on one play, whereas teens and adults like active team type games.

Playleaders are one of the most important parts of a PlayDay. They can be teachers, administrators, childcare workers, parents, or community volunteers. They are there to promote safety and creative, free flowing games throughout the day. The Playleader can make the most mundane games and activities more of a challenge and a lot more fun by watching the play and inserting his or her imagination into the game! The Playleaders will make sure that the play does not get out of hand. Most of the time the players will self-referee, but occasionally a game will need a ruling. Since most of the games don't have winners or losers the ruling can have a twist or the Playleader can

allow the teams to decide by a vote or the play can just be started over! The Playleaders also make sure that overly physical players check their play and don't overdo it. Older children and many adults don't know when they are playing beyond the ability of the rest of the players. A subtle hint by the Playleader can make the game more fun for the other players and insure that nobody gets hurt. (See Clement's article on Playworkers in this book.)

Once in a while a player will not cooperate or plays to hurt someone. Unfortunately the only choice for the Playleader is to warn the player and then ask that player to stop playing until the next game. This choice is not fun for anyone, but safety and the enjoyment of the rest of the players is much more important. Playleaders also can add a new game or change the current game to alleviate lulls in the play due to the abilities and attitudes of the players.

The type of games played on PlayDay must be determined for each play site and play group; indoor games will differ from outdoor games, hard surface games differ from soft surface games, little people games differ from big people games. If it is impossible to determine the site characteristics or the specific age groups, then the game types will have to be planned for all variables. If a game that is planned turns out to be inappropriate for the site or group, don't play it! It is better to eliminate a game than to have an injured player. If the players don't get the hang of a game or don't seem to like the rules, change the rules or play another game. The nice thing about a PlayDay is that it doesn't have a formula.

When organizing the game schedule plan to alternate between active and passive games. This will allow both players and Playleaders a chance to rest. Also, if the PlayDay is combined with another event, a changing and fresh mix of players will result. The alternating games will give the Playleaders a much needed break. Some games are much more popular and attract large crowds of players than others. It is sometimes necessary to end a game to disperse the crowd and to insure safety. If there are too many players in an active game for the Playleaders to control, it is always better to change the game or alter the rules than to keep from having an injury. The New Games Book (1976, 1981) is a great source for non-competitive games for PlayDay.

The equipment for a PlayDay should be as simple and inexpensive as possible. The mes-

sage to players is that it is not necessary to purchase specific and costly equipment to play. An imaginative mind is the most valuable piece of equipment on the field. The equipment should be easily replaceable in the event of breakage, or loss. It should be recycled from other uses if possible. This demonstrates how easy it is to play.

PlayDay Checklist(see next page)

The following checklist (Guddemi, 1992, see source for actual copy of checklist or request at <www.ipausa.org>) provides the designers of the PlayDay a "Quick Check" for all the important tasks and committees. Appoint a responsible person or committee chairperson for each major task. Specific tasks should then be developed for each committee. A timeline with target date for completion for each task should also be decided.

Resources

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PlayDay Checklist

Things to Remember

- ☐ Select PlayDay Chairperson/Co-chairperson
- ☐ Site/Date/Theme
- ☐ Activities/Special Events
- ☐ Play Leaders/Volunteer/Staff
- ☐ Refreshments
- ☐ Fund Raising
- ☐ Publicity
- ☐ Celebrities/Special Invited Guests
- ☐ Equipment/Material/Props
- ☐ Awards/Certificates
- ☐ First Aid Station
- ☐ Information Booth/Lost and Found
- ☐ Parking Facilities
- ☐ Liability Insurance
- ☐ Security
- ☐ Evaluations
- ☐ Clean-up

Favorite Activities

- ☐ **Noncompetitive games:**
 - Parachute games
 - Tag games
 - Movement games (Follow the leader, Simon-says)
 - Sack hops (no one wins or loses)
 - Water balloon toss
 - Tug-of-war
 - Simulated Olympic events
 - Obstacle course events
 - The know (in a group everyone joins hands randomly and then untangles)
- ☐ **Adventure Playground Activities**
(building and constructing anything (!) using large blocks, boxes, foam cushion, sheets, bales of hay, empty crates, rubber tubing, tape, etc)
- ☐ **Sand and waterplay area**
(a strategically places truck load of sand, some plastic sheets, sections of gutters, shovel and buckets)
- ☐ **Booths with developmentally appropriate activities:**
 - Fingerpainting
 - Lego's /Dupes®
 - Dramatic play center
 - Easel painting
 - Printmaking
 - Marble/spin painting
 - Go fish game
 - Face painting
 - Paper making
- ☐ **Sing-alongs**
- ☐ **Family Picnics**
- ☐ **Entertainment such as juggling, music, puppet shows and plays, dancing, magic.**

The ideas about how to plan, organize, and implement a PlayDay have been used at many PlayDays across the world with great success and with great intergenerational interactions.

The Child's Right to Play in a Changing Society

Marcy Guddemi, Tom Jambor, Robin Moore

In order to understand play in our changing society and that play is the "right" of children, a brief review of where the child's right to play originated is provided. This article also examines the factors in our society that prevent a child from playing, and concludes with a plan of action for the United States.

The Declaration on the Rights of the Child

Mankind owes the child the best it has to give," says the Declaration on the Rights of the Child in 1959. Four decades ago the United Nations granted children the right to food and survival, to shelter and protection, to development and education, to freedom and participation—and the right to leisure and play. This United Nations' document is the legal force behind almost all current educational and social legislation for children, such as PL 94-142, Chapter and Title Programs, AFDC and many similar programs. Ironically despite the widespread influence of this 1959 document, the United States has specifically ignored the child's right to play (Article 7, paragraph 3) as evidenced by an alarming lack of play opportunities and spaces for today's preschool and school age children, the lack of legislation and programs ensuring and providing for the child's right to play, and the blatant disregard of the United Nations' 1989 document, the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Since young children cannot be advocates for their own rights, the responsibility to speak out on the issues concerning the importance of play for young children falls upon all adults and especially policy makers in this changing society.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, the updated 1989 UN document on children's rights, is a critically important legal document. It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on November 20, 1989, and came into force on September 2, 1990. The Convention covers comprehensively the human and civil rights of all children, everywhere—including the right to play which is specifically addressed in Article 31. The Convention connects all

persons and groups who work with or on behalf of children.

While the "right to play" first appeared in the 1959 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child, it is now superseded by this more powerful, legally binding Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 31 of the Convention not only addresses the right to play, but also, appropriately, the right to cultural development and participation in the arts. In other words; play, culture, and arts are seen as closely linked, interwoven aspects of child and community development. Specifically Article 31 states:

- States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
- States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

Unfortunately, the United States chose not to sign the Convention in a timely fashion which embarrassingly places the USA—the only Western country—in company with only Somalia, a country that does not have a recognized government to act on this. On February 16, 1995, six years after the UN adoption, President Clinton finally signed the Convention and sent it to the Senate for ratification. However, the United States has yet to take action and legislate programs to ensure the rights of the child. The latest information on the status of the Convention can be obtained from the UNICEF Office on Children's Rights, New York <www.UNICEF.org>.

The International Association for the Child's Right to Play (IPA)

The International Association for the Child's Right to Play (IPA) was founded in 1961 to be a voice for the child's right to play and to support and uphold the original 1959 United Nations Declaration of Rights of the Child and the subsequent 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. IPA is a professional organization with various

memberships: educators, architects, landscape architects, physical educators, art educators, teachers, childcare givers, city planners, pediatricians, parents, and park and recreation people. IPA understands that the United Nations' granting to children the right to food and survival, to shelter and protection, to development and education, to freedom and participation—and the right to leisure and play—was the easy part. Guaranteeing children those same rights is much, much more difficult and is the ultimate mission of IPA.

IPA actively promotes the child's right to play in many ways. In 1977, as a lead into the 1979 International Year of the Child, IPA published the Declaration on the Child's Right to Play. The updated document (1990) explains Article 31 of the Convention and the IPA mission as advocacy tools to promote the child's right to play. It states that children are the foundation of the world's future and play is an integral part of this foundation.

- * "Children have played at all times throughout history and in all cultures.
- Play, along with the basic needs to nutrition, health, shelter and education, is vital to develop the potential of all children.
- Play is communication and expression, combining thought and action, it gives satisfaction and a feeling of achievement.
- Play is instinctive, voluntary, and spontaneous.
- Play helps children develop physically, mentally, emotionally and socially.
- Play is a means of learning to live, not a mere passing of time. (1990)"

Other IPA projects include publication of a quarterly magazine, *PlayRights*, sponsorship and participation in triennial world play conferences and annual regional conferences, membership on the U.N.'s Non-Government Organizations (NGO Council), official spokesperson for play issues in the media, and various play projects in developing nations. Currently, the most important agenda item for IPA/USA (the American affiliate of IPA) is to promote the Convention on the Rights of the Child, specifically Article 31 (1989), and to promote the child's right to recess (see Jarrett &

Young & Young's and Tyler's articles in this book and www.ipausa.org).

Current Status of Play in the USA

To discuss the status of play in the changing society of the USA, it is useful to review three contemporary play forms that are frequently (and infrequently) seen in children: informal, nonformal, and formal play.

Informal play is a universal form of play, genetically programmed in each individual and animal in what is assumed to be a biological drive of curiosity (Burghardt, in press). This form of play stimulates children's capacity to learn, to develop basic skills and competencies through exploration and engagement with the world around them. In free, informal play children activate their genetic inheritance as part of the Earth's biosystem—the play environment of water, dirt, vegetation, and animals.

Nonformal play includes programmed forms of play where children work with trained play professionals in playful settings. The adult role is to work alongside children, to facilitate rather than direct activity. Traditional games such as jump rope, stickball, chanting games, chasing games, etc., in a sense are a bridge between the informal and nonformal domains of play. They are a form of play that is constantly being influenced by and adapted to the changing social and cultural context of childhood—by children themselves. Traditional games are one means available to children to adapt themselves creatively to situations where play opportunities are limited, for instance in the hard environment of inner city neighborhoods. But traditional games also provide a vehicle for practicing and perfecting play skills. Traditional games can also provide a starting point or cultural frame of reference in the programming of nonformal play.

An interesting case of nonformal play is the children's museum, an institution that has seen such phenomenal growth in recent years. Many are excellent examples of nonformal education centers. Many offer playful settings and activities, especially for the young children; however the main emphasis of most children's museums is education, rather than play, since the learning objectives are preset by the design as one-way relationships with stand alone "exhibits." Although exhibits are often presented as fashionably "interactive," in reality the

range, degree, and depth of interactivity bears little comparison to manipulative, free play environments where children are in control of their own behavior (especially those providing natural materials).

Formal play is like formal education. It is the sector of play that is highly directed by adults. It certainly includes sports and games of the physical education. Little League variety where attitudes of "winning at all costs" have been severely criticized in recent years. But formal play could also include children's theater. It also includes the more recent indoor commercial play developments with names such as Kids Sports and Discovery Zone. These settings usually limit their offerings within a narrow range of gross motor play in fixed environments that in fact leave very little to be manipulated (except for the ubiquitous ball pits). Even less is provided to stimulate the imagination!

One cannot dispute that all types of play are important; but informal play is an essential need for a child's development. Daily informal play is disappearing from the lives of US children in this changing society. Children are losing one of their guaranteed rights. Several factors are evident in today's society that affect the future of informal play and necessitate far stronger advocacy for play.

1. Continuing poverty. More than one out of five children in the United States are living with inadequate provision for survival and development because of poverty and sub-standard living conditions. In our inner cities, conditions are very similar to third world economies. Children are rearing younger children, performing manual labor for drug money, and begging for food rather than playing. Many children are forced to work at life sustaining chores as soon as they are old enough to follow directions or to understand that if they don't work they will be beaten. Poverty forces children to be miniature adults during the early years. It robs away a child's right to informal play and presents an uncrossable barrier to nonformal and formal play opportunities, as well.

2. Changing cultural values. While there is no place or time for any type of play in poverty, there is an indifference toward the importance of informal play in more affluent neighborhoods. Whereas, children

traditionally have been shielded from adult responsibilities and encouraged to play into their teen years, now play is increasingly frowned on by parents who want their children to "learn" at the earliest possible moment, rather than play. "Learning" means academics, or perhaps music or sports skills; however parents overlook the social and emotional learning that come through play. Society believes that play is frivolous, while "work—especially school work—is productive.

3. Inadequate time. According to both David Elkind, (*The Hurried Child*, 1982) Neil Postman and (*The Disappearance of Childhood*, 1982) childhood and play are rapidly disappearing in the United States and other Western nations. Children's weekly itineraries are jammed with a progression of lessons and formal play opportunities such as music lessons, scout meetings, little league, soccer, and dance lessons. There is not sufficient time to allow children to play informally, to just let them be children in their own space and time.

Today, children are also being thrust into adulthood by wearing adult or sexually provocative clothes, by being constantly exposed to sexual and violent situations on TV and radio, and by being forced to handle adult stresses, such as divorce, unemployment, war, and racial oppression.

Another cultural trend is the increased dependence on TV, media, and video/computer games as part of the child's daily routine. Preschool children watch an average of 4.5 hours daily of television alone. Passively viewing TV and other media/technology is a double negative on the child's right to play. Not only can children be adversely affected by what they view increasing violence and aggression, but also time spent watching TV and playing video games could be time spent genuinely playing and interacting (Guddemi, 1986). The American Academy of Pediatrics in 1999 took the position that one hour or less of TV viewing is plenty for children. In addition they are retraining pediatricians to survey the viewing habits of their young patients and advise parents (AAP, 1999).

4. Inadequate space. Recently, Earnest Boyer in his book *Ready to Learn* (1992) commented, "Children give life to neighborhoods, yet neighborhoods are giving nothing back to children." Children need

safe spaces close to home in which to play together and to be creative. It is a need that has not received sufficient priority in the development and redevelopment of urban neighborhoods. Children growing up in high density cities in apartment complexes have as little as 4 square meters of living and playing space per family. Research shows that the higher the floor of residential occupancy, the less children play. In their rush to build banks, hotels, malls, and suburbs, cities have forgotten the play needs of their children. One reason is that developers have no incentive to build play spaces into their designs.

Internationally, nine countries have some form of national standards for children's play spaces in residential environments but the United States is not one of them. Even in the suburbs (toated as the answer to crime ridden and crowded inner cities), there are few sidewalks and few play spaces devoted to children. For many children walking or riding bikes to a friend's house to play is hazardous and parents are fearful of the "Bogeyman Syndrome" (Moore and Jambor, 1996)-the stranger who kidnaps and kills young children. Parents complain that all play experiences require a chauffeur and must be prearranged. Community developments that do plan for a play or recreation space cater mainly to adults' needs with clubhouses, tennis, and exercise rooms, and not to the child's needs.

5. Changing school agendas. Play opportunities have also fallen on hard times for children at many elementary schools across the nation. Recesses and the lunch "hour" are being sacrificed for increased academic content and if there is a break it is teacher-directed calisthenics (Jarrett & Young, 1999). Administrators and teachers, pressured to exhibit high standardized test scores, have in many cases eliminated the playground time cherished by children in the past. Diminished are opportunities for children to develop and nurture social and physical skills, as well as opportunities to work out emotional responses in a setting with few adult restrictions. Lost are the outdoor play periods that produced and preserved childhood games and rituals, passed on from older to younger children.

Today's elementary schools and preschools overemphasize "work" and under emphasize "play" indoors. Many

schools and learning settings force young children to sit all day with dittos, paper and pencil tasks, working on rote memorization exercises. Children, however, learn through play! They need to explore and play with their environment by touching and manipulating objects and materials in order to test their developing cognitive constructs against reality for optimal intellectual growth. But these developmental opportunities are disappearing as indoor play, as well as outdoor recess play periods, are squeezed out of the curriculum and abolished by all too many schools.

Play in its fullest potential, not only helps children grow and learn intellectual skills, but also enhances social skills by stimulating children to interact creatively, to settle differences through sharing, cooperating, and turn taking. Play is the integrating vehicle of society by gender, age and ethnic background. Children grow and learn emotionally and gain confidence and self respect through their successful play activities. And, of course, play helps children grow physically as they gain coordination, strength, agility, and other basic physical skills. Play, in fact, is one of the most important requirements for developing a healthy, whole child. To eliminate school recess is, thus, counterproductive to all areas of children's development (Jarrett & Young, 1999 and Tyler, 1999).

6. Decline of fitness. With play disappearing in the lives of today's children, there are much higher health and fitness risks throughout life than experienced by those children of past generations. The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that 50% of American children are not getting enough exercise to develop healthy hearts and lungs; 40% of our 5 to 8 year old children show at least one risk factor for heart disease - high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or low physical activity; low physical activity also means children will be more susceptible to other serious health problems like hypertension, diabetes, psychological disorders and impaired heart tolerance. Sedentary behavior has put our children's health and fitness in jeopardy. During the past 25 years obesity has increased 54% among American children between the ages of 6 and 11; 15 - 20% of our children are fat; 55% of girls and 25% of boys between ages 6 and 11 cannot do even 1 pushup (AAP,

1988).

By removing play opportunities indoors and outdoors we are taking away the child's right to grow up as healthy individuals. The solution to these health and fitness problems is simple: increase play opportunities for our children and we will increase their physical activity, and thus, physical ability and health.

Unfortunately few educators realize the vast importance of a curriculum that provides a balance between mind and body. Physical exercise shapes the bones, muscles, heart and lungs. It fuels the brain with a better blood supply, feeds brain cells with a healthier supply of natural substances that enhance their growth, and helps the brain to provide a greater number of connections between its neurons. Vigorous physical play makes the brain better able to process all kinds of information. Liberal doses of play could raise those all important test scores!

7. Loss of play value due to improved playground safety guidelines. From the first outdoor gymnasium at the Salem, Massachusetts, Latin School, to the first park playground in Chicago, to today's multitude of slick contemporary playground designs, playgrounds are but an icon for childhood. Although playground designs have changed over the years, children have not and neither have their play needs. Children continue to seek out challenges within their play environment and reach out for new levels of excitement once skills are mastered. The play value of any playground can be judged by the interactions of the children using it. However, as children seek new challenges a certain amount of bumps and scratches are likely to occur. They are the inevitable consequence of playful interactions and the minor misjudgments that are the essence of learning by doing or learning by trial and error

The main purpose of safety standards should be not to avoid the inevitable minor hurts, but to protect children from more serious injury. Approximately 170,000 children are injured seriously enough on American playgrounds each year to warrant hospital treatment. These statistics have prompted the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM) to develop guidelines for America's playgrounds.

Besides providing guidelines for equipment design, surfaces, and installation these guidelines are now used in our courts of law as a standard to judge liability in an injury case. The encouraging news is that we are becoming aware of playground hazards and poorly designed features and are eliminating them. The discouraging news is that playgrounds have become ever more boring and sterile environments creating a double-bind for playground designers and manufacturers.

In America the word "playground" has become almost synonymous with "liability" and "litigation." In the name of safety, and burdened by the fear of lawsuits, challenge and risk-taking adventure have been factored out of playgrounds. Without challenge children often do not return, or, if they do, they find ways to take risks, to get thrills, and to find adventure by using equipment in ways the designer had not intended. The relationship seems clear. When "play value" is reduced, children find a way to factor it back in - usually in the form of undesirable risk-taking! Creating "safe" playgrounds with high "play value" has become a most difficult task, indeed.

While the problem appears complex, one answer may actually be quite simple. Scrap the "evolutionary spun" playgrounds of the past 100 years and let children have their land back. Allow them to return to their natural play environment—the one that originally existed before the neighborhood existed. Make playground designs move beyond an excessive focus on equipment and replant the forests and fields that once were there as "natural play preserves." Produce designs that compact these natural elements to fit into neighborhood and school sites. Frederick Froebel wrote in 1887 that children's outdoor playgrounds were nature itself. Let children return to Froebel's nature playground—creating dams, canals and bridges in natural streams; nurturing gardens of flowers, plants and trees; exploring boulders, ridges and tree limbs; raising and caring for animals; running and playing games in open fields. Children have not changed. They are still looking for places to climb trees, to build forts, to play childhood games, and to just kick back and watch the clouds roll by—places to be a child and to do child-like things.

Conclusion

Children's natural, free, informal play and how and where it happens is a clear measure of the health of any society. The way children's play has been changing and evolving in the United States in the last few years reflects and predicts the future of play and the society, perhaps. The two the most crucial predictors of play are time and space.

Time

Play takes time—a particular type of time, less bounded by pressures of functional living. As the time pressures intrude, play diminishes in quality; if they become too dominant, play ceases altogether. The best way to document change of course is to ask the children themselves. Are they spending more or less time playing now than in the past? And how will these trends develop in the future? Much evidence has been presented in recent years as to the loss of playtime and the formalization of it. As we have already discussed, children are spending more time engaged in formal play outside of school that is just one step removed from the classroom: music lessons, sports activities, even extra tutoring in academic subjects.

Many more children, certainly, are spending more hours in afterschool care programs. These programs offer children, whose families can afford them, a wide range of opportunities but rarely true informal play opportunities. And what do a vast number of children do with their leisure time if they are not in an organized program? More than likely they stay at home passively watching television or playing violent computer/video games in cramped domestic spaces.

Space

Play also takes adequate space. The problem is that viable, protected, secure spaces, offering adequate diversity of play settings and therefore play choices are not being provided. Parents at all income levels perceive that streets are more dangerous than they used to be—that children playing in the street, or local park or playground run a risk of being physically harmed in some way. In some communities these concerns have reached levels of unreasonable paranoia.

Playgrounds, where they exist, still usually focus on manufactured, fixed equipment. But this is only one type of setting—important, certainly, but hardly adequate to meet the full range of developmental needs of

healthy children. Besides gross motor play, children need opportunities to stimulate fine motor skills, social development, negotiation, creativity, problem-solving skills, imagination, emotional skills, as well as direct experience of their inherited world. Furthermore, these dimensions of development tend to have a low priority in the formal curricula's of school. How can children access spaces that stimulate these dimensions, now that neighborhood streets, vacant lots and open fields are not available? It is evident that a growing number of children lack these essential opportunities in the USA.

A Plan of Action for the United States

What can we do to guarantee the child his right to informal free play?

1. Ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child and engage young people in a national, nonformal education programs to understand their rights.
2. Create legislation for minimum provision of playspaces in new and rehabilitated residential areas.
3. Develop guidelines and standards for the conservation of natural features and areas in land use planning and residential subdivision to serve children's need for informal, free play.
4. Promote traffic-calming designs on residential streets to make them available for children's play as well as to create a community pedestrian zone for all residents.
5. Advocate and develop play programs for after-school and during school vacations.
6. Replace passive TV viewing and aggressive video/computer games with active informal play opportunities.
7. Develop safe-haven play and learning centers on school sites and other suitable community locations easily accessible to children, providing nonformal educational opportunities focused on domains of child development that typically are not receiving sufficient attention in the formal educational program, for example the arts (also a focus of Article 31).
8. Make recess and extended play time at lunch mandatory in public schools.
9. Work with schools of education and teacher training programs to establish a full understanding of "learning through play." (Clements, 1999)
10. Work with schools of education and

teacher training programs to establish credentialed programs in playwork and animation. Promote the professional status of these new professionals who are trained specifically to work with children through play.

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MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD & The Role of the Adult in Encouraging Children's Play

Hedda Sharapan

"They are more imaginative . . . more creative." That is what we hear about the children who watch MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD. That is no surprise to me, having worked alongside Fred Rogers for over thirty years and having looked at his work from my perspective of child development. While there are lots of ways MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD encourages imaginative and creative play, there is one particular kernel that I would like to share, and it is one that may surprise you because it is deceptively simple but it is very rich and powerful. To appreciate that kernel it helps to know about Fred Rogers' background. He is the creator of this PBS series, now in its 31st season, the composer and lyricist for the Neighborhood music, the main puppeteer, and the host!

Fred Rogers' own childhood was filled with creative play. As an only child, for his first eleven years, Fred spent many of his childhood days making up plays with friends in his neighborhood, playing with his toys and making music at the piano. These early interests and experiences played an important role in his later adult career choices.

In 1951, after completing college studies in Music Composition, Fred headed to NBC to learn about television so that he might be able to produce something that would be better for children than the slapstick comedy and nonsense that was prevalent in the field. Two years later, he returned to his native area of Pittsburgh at the request of the fledgling WQED educational station to become program manager and then co-producer for a local children's program "The Children's Corner." For eight years, he worked behind-the-scenes as puppeteer and organist for this hour-live daily freewheeling program. During lunch hours, he took courses at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and was ordained in 1962 as a Presbyterian minister with a special charge of serving children and families through television. In order to better understand the "inner dramas" of children so that he might be able to offer a television program that fit their needs, concerns, and interest, he went on to do graduate work in Child Development at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

and has continued lifelong studies in this field.

An appreciation of play for children's growing, learning, and coping was at the core of the Child Development graduate curriculum, and so it was only natural that he would pour it into the very foundation of MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD when he created the daily half-hour "television visit" in 1966. With the national broadcast beginning in 1968, this half-hour daily program is the longest running program on public television. Still in production, three all-new weeks are added into the series each season. Fred Rogers does not think of himself as an "actor," but rather as a communicator. He does not think of MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD as a "show," but rather as a television visit. He is not a clown and is not costumed. He is himself, "Mister Rogers," a caring adult who wants to communicate with children in ways that help them feel good about themselves, about others, and about the world around them.

What does Fred Rogers offer in his television visits that encourages his "television friends" to be creative and imaginative? The answer is that he understands something very basic about the role of the creative adult . . . something so deceptively simple it is often overlooked or not understood. To illustrate that role, let me share with you one of Fred Rogers' favorite stories from his practicum work in Child Development, about a gifted sculptor who was the father of a kindergartner. At the request of the director of the school, this man came to the kindergarten once a week and simply loved the clay in the midst of the children. He did not teach about clay, he just loved it and showed how he could express his feelings with it in that place where children could watch him. Little by little, the children themselves began to love their clay and what it felt like to work with it and what they found they could make of it. That sculpting father came regularly for a whole year. Never before or since in that kindergarten have children used the medium of clay in such imaginative and satisfying ways—all because they caught the enthusiasm of someone who loved what he did

right in front of them.

Fred Rogers' mentor in Child Development, Dr. Margaret McFarland, who later became our chief consultant, tells a similar story about children's reaction to his work, remembering that when he brought his puppets to the preschool and enjoyed using them with the children, those preschoolers dug down into the toy trunk to bring out puppets that had lain untouched for months. To borrow from two metaphors, here is the kernel in a nutshell: "Attitudes are caught, not taught." Interestingly, that is an old Quaker saying, and it is an essential part of the role of the adult who wants to encourage children's creative play. For children (and adults!), just watching someone enjoy "play" can be contagious—especially if you have the sense that person cares about you and wants to share his or her pleasure in play with you. Whatever kind of "play" you love to do has a great chance of being "caught" when you share that with children and when they know you care about them.

We know that such "contagion" can happen through television. Television can be a powerful vehicle for helping children get to know people who love the creative experience or who have found playful or imaginative ways to express who they are. We hear that from our viewers and from their parents and from child-care providers and teachers. For one thing, the children are seeing Mister Rogers himself enjoying "playing"—while maintaining the role of the adult. Here are just a few examples from the Neighborhood:

On one of our favorite episodes, Mister Rogers joins in along with Ella Jenkins as she does a hand-motion song. It turns out to be rather hard for him to keep up with her pattern, but he allows himself to be "human" and clumsy, even laughing at his own awkward attempts. On another program he visits with the author-illustrator Eric Carle, and together these two men enjoy an unusual way of painting—using the back of a carpet piece instead of with a brush. Later on in the segment they delight in Eric Carle's reading of his newest book FROM HEAD TO TOE, waving, wiggling, or wriggling along with the animals in the story.

In the week of programs about sharing, Mister Rogers brings in a toy truck he borrowed and talks about how children might use just a block of wood if they don't have a truck and use such things to play about all sorts of feelings. On many programs he shows videos of factories where people make things, and many of those are basic playthings: dolls, toy cars, wagons, kazoos, crayons, colored markers, and construction paper. On each Neighborhood program, there is a solid presence of "make-believe"—with a daily visit to a place called the "Neighborhood of Make-Believe" where puppets and people help each other deal with all sorts of everyday concerns. In this Make-Believe place, anything can happen (by magic or whimsy or pretend) and anything can be talked about. Notice too how Mister Rogers introduces that segment with a welcoming invitation to his television friends of "Let's pretend." This Make-Believe place is clearly distinct from Mister Rogers' television Neighborhood where reality prevails. To maintain that separation, there is a transitional vehicle, like the Trolley or a model of a place in Make-Believe. And, we always come back from Make-Believe into Mister Rogers' television house where he talks about the story, sometimes distinguishing something that happened in make-believe from reality, and often encouraging the children to have their own pretending about the story or whatever else they would like.

All through the series, viewers have the opportunity to meet lots of guests (famous or not) who offer a smorgasbord of talents in a variety of creative media—such as movement, music, dance, and art—from world-famous cellist Yo-Yo Ma to a teenage yo-yo expert, from the Dance Theater of Harlem to rhythmic percussionists of the off-Broadway show STOMP!; from a paper sculptor to a furniture designer. Besides sharing with viewers the pleasure and meaning they have found in life through their creativity, these guests often mention things they played about as a child and how those things are related to their work or interest later on in life.

Finding pleasure in play, like most things in this world, happens, "people-to-people." It is caught not taught. Haven't you found, too, that it is through relationships that we grow best and learn best—in MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD and in any "neighborhood." Who are the people who

influenced you through their fascination with or delight in some kind of play? Because you care so genuinely about play and about children, you are that same kind of model for the next generation!

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Recess ... How Important Is It?

Vernelle Tyler

The playing child is a verbal child. Children often talk to themselves and others during playtime. They hum, sing, chant, chatter, and rhyme. During playtime, children skip, hop, run, jump, and climb. Play is a reflection of and an influence on all areas of children's development: intellectual, social, emotional, and physical. As described by Hughes (1991), play is the vehicle by which children communicate, socialize, learn about the world around them, understand themselves, and others. During school recess periods, children find a way to communicate their ideas, gain cooperation of others, and respond in turn, to the ideas of others.

Recess, the traditional period treasured by children for decades, is being shaded by some and has become a thing of the past in several schools across the country. Faced with budget cuts, some schools nationwide have reduced the time allotted for recess and gym classes. Atlanta, Georgia, for example, has discontinued building playgrounds for newly constructed schools and has voted to eliminate recess completely. Some Florida school districts are offering recess only to kindergartners and first graders. A number of school districts are turning recess into physical education classes, and still others are rotating P.E. classes with other classes, placing children in one- and two-week alternating blocks. Many educators attribute the decline of recess to an increase in worries from school districts regarding liabilities due to student injuries and a shortage of teachers to adequately supervise students.

Once children start school, play usually remains the primary preferred activity, but the time devoted to it declines. In fact, many of the activities that schools treat as play, especially physical fitness and competitive games, may not fulfill the young child's criteria for pleasurable play (Newman & Newman, 1997). Although P.E. involves the child in physical activity, it is not recess. During a period of physical education, the teacher usually insists on order and gives directions on what children are expected to do. Students are restricted from roaming freely, choosing their own games, and socializing with peers.

Jason, a jovial six-year-old first grader, informed his parents that his favorite subject

in school was "recess." Fortunately, Jason's parents realized their son was happy, receptive to school, and eager to learn. They felt that good play accentuated Jason's total development and were pleased that he enjoyed the 20-minute recess period provided by his school. Jason, like numerous other students, enjoys learning and growing through play. This is not surprising since recess allows children to be spontaneous, release excess energy, laugh out loud, make choices, share with others, and learn from others.

Unlike Jason's parents, many individuals including some educators, view recess as the most useless of activities — "as almost sinful" (Hughes, 1991, p. 11). Critics of recess have called playgrounds asphalt deserts where children are taken for 20 minutes to run off steam before getting to the important learning inside (Wolfgang & Wolfgang, 1999). To the contrary, Forbes (1998), a supporter of recess, believes the playground is the ideal place for children to run off steam, which helps them to freshen up for more instruction. Recess supporters realize that since play is enjoyable for children, a designated outdoor space for free exploration allows children to relax and reduce anxiety.

Many teachers are learning to deal with students' hyperactivity disorders and are constantly trying strategies to assist students in improving classroom behavior and academic performance. Children who are denied recess are more fidgety in the classroom. Many teachers agree that the amount of instructional time lost to calming the fidgety student adds up to the amount of time it takes to have recess in the first place. However, the benefits of recess go far beyond the "fidget factor" according to Pellegrini (1989). Children can learn important social skills on the playground, make choices, and interact with their peers. Recess is the perfect time for the teacher to observe students for overly aggressive behavior or other emotional and physical disabilities. Supporters of recess realize that play releases tensions and pent-up emotions in children, as well as encourages self-discovery and possibilities for solving problems. For some children, the school playground may be the only time they are able to

play outside and interact with peers. A well-designed playground allows children the opportunity to try new roles and to experiment in a safe setting with a variety of equipment created to enhance their play. According to Burke (1987), children who have experiences that encourage a playful, imaginative approach to the manipulation and exploration of materials and equipment, show evidence of more complex language use, and more flexible approaches to problem solving.

In a 1991 National Association of Elementary School Principals' (NAESP) survey of 383 elementary and middle school principals, most agreed that recess has educational and social values, particularly if well-organized and well-supervised by adults. NAESP (1999) recognizes recess as an important component in a child's physical and social development and is encouraging principals to develop and maintain appropriate supervised, unstructured "free play" recess for children during the school day. This resolution has been voted on by NAESP's Resolution Committee, and will be submitted as well as voted by the Delegate assembly on March 23, 1999, during NAESP's annual convention in San Francisco, California. If the recess resolution is adopted, it will be part of NAESP's 1999 platform.

In today's competitive society, parents expect the best for their children (and the best is often interpreted as "My child must be first ... the best ... and do better than others!") There is the expectant father who reads to his unborn child so that the newborn will be ready to read sooner than any of his peers. There is also the parent who objects to the preschool teacher's recommendation that the late-to-develop child stay another year in the 4-year-old class before entering public school kindergarten who replies, "But she will be late for qualifying exams for med school!!!" (Wolfgang & Wolfgang, 1999, p. 11). Obviously, the importance of play in the social, intellectual, emotional, and physical growth of young children cannot be underestimated. Numerous parents and educators tend to measure a young child's cognitive growth in terms of the acquisition of words and concepts that seem relevant to the adult's world.

Many youngsters today are caught up in the middle of their parents' overly anxious attitudes regarding their children's achievements and their teachers' stressful attitudes regarding accountability and standards. Elkind (1981, 1987) warned about the pressures on young children to give up their childhood and enter the world of competition and self-reliance too soon. In many families, parents take the role of teacher too far, too fast. They impose their own frustrated dreams and goals on their young children. When this occurs, children are forced toward unrealistic levels of achievement and competition. Newman and Newman (1997) believe parents can accomplish a lot with their children when they see themselves as teachers, but they must stay focused on identifying their children's own interest and goals rather than their own. Parents and teachers must learn to recognize and value their children's achievements, provide accurate feedback to help them progress, encourage children's own investigation, and remain flexible about the ultimate outcome.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) studied and observed children in their natural environment in reference to how they spent their time. He found out that most complex cognitive activities took place during children's games and play periods. While children engage in play, they enact a variety of roles such as parent, child, firefighter, grocer, teacher, and even super hero. In order to portray such characters accurately, children must mentally put themselves in others' places and experience the world from their points of view. This surely aids in the young child's language development. Play during students' recess periods contributes to the child's ability to explain, describe, articulate, use typical sentence construction, and seek information. Children's play initiates verbal expressions. Verbal expressions help to keep the play situation moving in the way the children want it to, and the experience of hearing themselves talk aloud, helps to blend their speech and actions with the speech and actions of others. Young children get satisfaction from increasing their word power.

Our children are our future. Young children need nurturing support from adults who value the importance of children's work, as well as children's play. Naturally, recess is not the ultimate key to a child's educational success, but eliminating recess

will restrict a child's educational experience. As Pellegrini and Glickman (1989) point out, "Recess is one of the few times during the school day when children are free to exhibit a wide range of social competencies — sharing, cooperation, and negative and persuasive language — in a context they see as meaningful" (p. 24).

How important is recess? Very ... It is the one thing that children want and deserve! According to Jason, "It's the best time of the school day!"

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The Right to Play: A Global Issue

Living with Landmines in Kurdistan/Northern Iraq

Harry Shire

In many parts of the world, landmines deprive children of their right to play. This paper describes a unique, community arts training program which took place in the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq. The program helped local Kurdish arts and media workers develop a community arts approach and use a range of creative play activities to help children and families learn to keep themselves safe from landmines.



In many parts of the world, landmines deny children their right to outdoor play (this is in addition to the economic and social damage landmines cause to adults and children alike in rural communities). Most obviously this affects those thousands of children who have become disabled as a result of mine injuries, but the fear of this hidden danger deprives whole communities of access to their traditional play space.

The United Nations reckons there are more than 110 million landmines scattered



in 64 countries around the world. That is one landmine for every twelve children alive today. Another 100 million are stockpiled ready for use, and more are still being produced. Children are particularly at risk from landmine injury because of their curiosity and love of play. In many parts of the world, landmines are scattered in areas where children have traditionally played, so the children are denied the use of their play space. Nevertheless, children still love to play outside, even in heavily mined areas. Young children have often mistaken mines for playthings, as some types of mines are made of coloured plastic and look like toys. In some areas, there are so many landmines that children get used to them and forget the risks involved. Kurdish children in northern Iraq use landmines to improvise toys and play equipment. Because of their small size, children who step on landmines are more likely to be killed than adults are. Those that survive are often permanently disabled, losing arms, legs or eyes. Losing an arm or leg is worse for a child than an adult because they are still growing, so even if they are given a false arm or leg, they will soon grow too big for it and need a new one.

Kurdistan, the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq, is one of the world's worst affected areas. The UK-based Mines Advisory Group is one of the leading non-government organizations working to clear mines and return land to the community. It currently has projects in northern Iraq, Angola, Cambodia and Laos, Zambia and Congo. MAG is one of the partner organizations in the International Campaign to Ban Landmines which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997.

As well as surveying and clearing minefields, MAG runs community mine awareness programs helping those who live in mined areas to keep themselves and their families safe. It will be many years before all the mines can be cleared, so this work is equally important in saving lives and preventing mine injuries.

The Community Mine Awareness Program (CMAP) in northern Iraq was established in 1992, making it one of the longest established in the world. By the beginning of 1997, MAG had carried out over 4,300 mine awareness programs. Mine



awareness activities include: mine awareness programs in schools; "Child to Child" mine awareness programs, where children are trained and supported so they can take the lead in activities to increase mine awareness among their peers; village consultation, mine awareness and safety programs carried out by MAG Advance Teams; training programs for teachers; public education mine awareness campaigns, using a range of media including radio and television (widely available in towns and cities, though less so in rural areas); production of mine awareness posters, leaflets, stickers and other visual materials; production of mine recognition kits; production and distribution of a quarterly children's magazine, *Awat and Hevi*, which communicates mine awareness messages through stories, cartoons, children's artwork, poems, songs and games; mine awareness education programs for other agencies including UN and NGO's working in mine affected areas.

In keeping with MAG's commitment to sustainability and developing local control (indigenisation), all the above activities are organized, carried out and managed by local (i.e. Kurdish) workers employed by MAG. The program has just one UK expatriate officer as Program Manager. Due to the difficulties of travel to and from northern Iraq, all training and development needs of the local workers must be met through locally devised and delivered programs.

This extensive, and still growing Community Mine Awareness Program requires a wide range of resources and materials. Due to the difficult and at times dangerous nature of the northern Iraq autonomous region, all NGO's, including MAG, have to be as self-sufficient as possible in terms of logistics, communications, materials and equipment. Resource materials for the CMAP, therefore, have to be developed and produced within the region.

This is made difficult by the lack of access to modern production facilities such as quality printing facilities, and unavailability or chronic shortages of most basic materials.

On the other hand, there are individuals with professional skills in all aspects of art, design and media production. It must be remembered that before the Gulf War and the establishment of the autonomous Kurdish region, Iraq as a whole was a wealthy, highly developed state. Although conditions in the north are now very difficult and resources are scarce, there is still a reservoir of professional arts and media expertise.

MAG therefore established a specialist Resource Production Unit (RPU), with the specific task of producing the resource materials needed for the growing CMAP. Based at MAG's northern Iraq headquarters in the city of Suleimaniyah, the RPU team consisted of twelve people: a Resource Co-ordinator/team leader, three visual artists, two photographers, two media directors (specializing in video/TV production), a calligrapher/Arabic-Kurdish DTP specialist, a scriptwriter, and a TV presenter and translator.

This team has undertaken a wide range of resource production assignments including:

- a wide range of posters, aimed at different groups of people at risk
- a quarterly children's magazine;
- games and teaching aids;
- leaflets, booklets and stickers;
- mine awareness kits for schools;
- a regular television program;
- a radio soap opera;
- a series of video dramas for children.

MAG felt that this unit's effectiveness could be increased, and methods for the design, development, testing, targeting and evaluating of resources could be improved if the team worked more closely with the communities for whom the resources were intended, particularly by using a community arts approach, and working creatively with local children.

In 1997 I travelled to northern Iraq, to lead a training program for the local team to develop new ideas and introduce a community arts approach. The agreed aim of the training program was, "To contribute to the saving of life and limb for the people of Kurdistan/North Iraq, by enabling the MAG Resource Production Unit to design, test and produce increasingly effective awareness resource materials." Based on this aim, a

series of twelve specific learning objectives was drawn up, centred on the underlying issues of communication, but covering also children's rights, disability equality, creative use of games to aid learning, and a range of practical arts and media techniques. An eleven-day training course was then designed, using a wide range of participatory and experiential methods to address the agreed learning objectives. The approach to training placed an emphasis on co-operative learning, sharing and problem-solving in groups. These are recognized as fundamental principles of community education, and reflect the approach advocated in all MAG's mine awareness programs.

The entire program had to be delivered through the medium of Kurdish. As the trainers did not speak Kurdish, this meant everything had to be translated. The RPU team included a very able interpreter, and two other members also spoke good English and were able to share the load.

Conclusions

An evaluation was carried out at the end of the training program, which showed it had been very successful in meeting its objectives. A number of tentative conclusions can be drawn from the experience. The first is that there are many opportunities for children who have to live with landmines to learn practical safety information, safer behaviour and positive attitudes through creative arts, games and imaginative play. Training local workers to facilitate this kind of playful learning is a viable approach which has much scope for development, both in northern Iraq and other areas.

This project also demonstrated the effectiveness of a participatory approach to learning in the training of adult Mine Awareness Workers. Although it was new and unfamiliar to most of them, the participants agreed that this approach was superior to traditional teaching. They particularly valued methods such as working in groups to solve problems. The MAG RPU team showed themselves willing to adapt to this new approach. This suggests that there is much further scope for the training of local mine awareness educators, using arts, play and creativity, rather than traditional didactic methods.

Some months after the training program, MAG decided to re-structure the CMAP. Instead of having one centrally-based arts and media team, they decided to deploy arts workers more widely throughout the pro-

gram, making it easier for them to implement the lessons from the training program by working directly with children and families.

The right to play is very much a global issue, and it is often global forces beyond their control that deprive children of this right. By using play itself as a tool to facilitate learning, and so help children keep safe, this project showed how practice of play can become a tool to restore the child's right to play.

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Play in a Changing Society

As societies have changed so has the play of children—but has the need for children to play changed? The answer is no. Children need play more than ever to help them cope with all the changes in the world around them and all the future changes that are eminent. As we move into the next millennium, play with all its inherent benefits for helping children grow and learn, develop social and physical skills, and enhance self confidence and emotional strength is essential for success in the future. The articles in this book describe benefits and theories of play, the role of play in education and fitness, the role of play in a changing society, and the cry for play advocacy to protect the right of the child to play.

Including:

Rhonda Clements on *The Emergence of Playworkers in the USA*

Susan D. Hudson and Donna Thompson on *Reducing "Risk" on Playgrounds*

Olga Jarrett and Catherine Young on *Outdoor Games at Recess*

Hedda Sharapan on *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*

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Cover Photograph: Marcy Guddemi

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